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THE ANTE NICENE CHURCH,

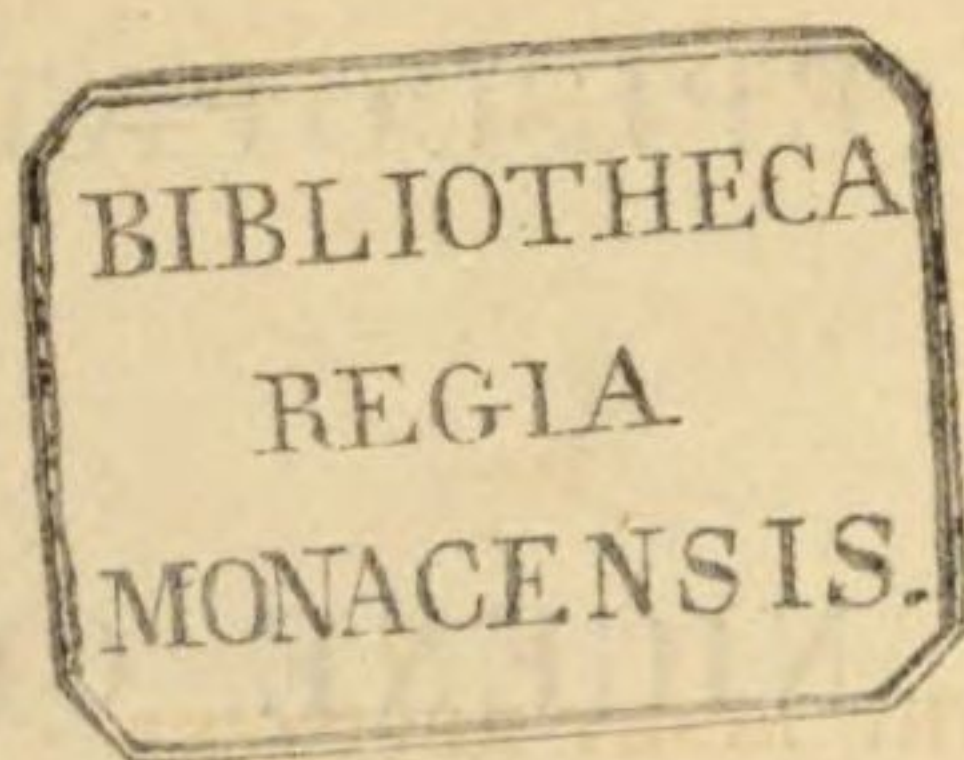
(WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE EARLY
POSITION OF THE ROMAN SEE).

BY THE REVEREND
GEORGE M. GORHAM, B.A.,
FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
AND CROSSE UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR.

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Ecce qualis Episcopus.—ORIGEN, Hom. ii. *in Numer.*
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IS DEDICATED

IN GRATEFUL AND AFFECTIONATE VENERATION.

ETON COLLEGE,

January, 1854.

PREFACE.

THE following pages were originally composed under the form of an Essay to which the Hulsean Prize was adjudged in the year 1853. The subject proposed by the Trustees was "The Position and History of the Christian Bishops, and especially of the Bishop of Rome, during the first three Centuries." In committing my Essay to the press, according to Mr Hulse's injunctions, I have made but very few alterations in its shape and matter: but I have given it a title which appears more exactly to suit the method, general rather than historical, in which I have discussed the subject.

CLAUSES *directed by the FOUNDER to be always prefixed
to the HULSEAN DISSERTATION.*

CLAUSES from the WILL of the Rev. JOHN HULSE, late of Elworth, in the County of Chester, clerk, deceased: dated the twenty-first day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven; expressed in the words of the Testator, as he, in order to prevent mistakes, thought proper to draw and write the same himself, and directed that such clauses should every year be printed, to the intent that the several persons, whom it might concern and be of service to, might know that there were such special donations or endowments left for the encouragement of Piety and Learning, in an age so unfortunately addicted to Infidelity and Luxury, and that others might be invited to the like charitable, and, as he humbly hoped, seasonable and useful Benefactions.

He directs that certain rents and profits (now amounting to about a hundred pounds yearly) be paid to such learned and ingenious person, in the University of Cambridge, under the degree of Master of Arts, as shall compose, for that year, the best Dissertation, in the English language, on the Evidences in general, or on the Prophecies or Miracles in particular, or any other

particular Argument, whether the same be direct or collateral proofs of the Christian Religion, in order to evince its truth and excellence; the subject of which Dissertation shall be given out by the Vice-Chancellor, and the Masters of Trinity and Saint John's, his Trustees, or by some of them, on New Year's Day annually; and that such Dissertation as shall be by them, or any two of them, on Christmas Day annually, the best approved, be also printed, and the expense defrayed out of the Author's income under his Will, and the remainder given to him on Saint John the Evangelist's Day following; and he who shall be so rewarded, shall not be admitted at any future time as a Candidate again in the same way, to the intent that others may be invited and encouraged to write on so sacred and sublime a subject.

He also desires, that immediately following the last of the clauses relating to the prize Dissertation, this invocation may be added: "May the Divine Blessing for ever go along with all my benefactions; and may the Greatest and the Best of Beings, by His all-wise Providence and gracious Influence, make the same effectual to His own glory, and the good of my fellow-creatures!"

Subject proposed by the TRUSTEES for the Year 1853.

"The position and history of the Christian Bishops, and especially of the Bishop of Rome, during the first Three Centuries."

Analysis.

PART I.

THE GROWTH OF ECCLESIASTICAL SYSTEM.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory . . . pp. 1—17

§ 1. The subject matter. Advantages of historical disquisitions. The object simply historical. Principles may be hence deduced; but are not here applied to matters of controversial aspect. Exception; the grounds of its justification. Recent events and recent discovery.

§ 2. The means and method of investigation. Sources of historical information; direct; indirect; forged; antagonistic. The period of inquiry, determined by the Council of Nicæa. The method of inquiry.

CHAPTER II.

The Primitive Church as a System . 18—38

§ 1. A contrast. Developement of Discipline and Order. Scriptural indications of systematic Church government. The gradual evolution of system inconsistent neither with special Charismata nor the universal Priesthood. The Church a totality, not an aggregate of units.

§ 2. Further developement of Discipline and Order. The Apostles, and in particular S. John. Sources of in-

formation as to the second Century. The title *Episcopus* now limited to the first Order. Mutual relations of the Churches. Gradual consociation of coprovincial Churches. The Synod. Its effect on the Episcopate. Form as well as Matter necessary to the shaping of Christian Union. Unity implies some Uniformity. The Visible Polity.

CHAPTER III.

The Episcopal Element in early Church System 39—73

§ 1. Neander's representations of Cyprianic Episcopacy. Our judgment to be derived from the testimony of contemporary rather than the speculations of recent authors. Patristic feelings on Unity more vivid than our own. The Episcopal College held to be the source of this Unity in the Cyprianic Age. The Bishop of antiquity was the bond of Union in his Church. He was the representative of that Church—its Angel. Testimony of S. Ignatius. Value of the Succession. The representative of the Church in affliction no less than in her wealth.

§ 2. How did these important functions become attached to the Episcopal Office? Theory that Episcopal power was the fruit of competition and ambition. Digression on the neglect of Ecclesiastical history, and the consequent misapprehension of Church Progress. Importance of the Episcopate not due to priestcraft. It is too Catholic a feature. Every permanent element in a Polity is either of its essence or of spontaneous developement. The Episcopate and its prerogatives developed and matured by the free Action and Reaction of events: especially in Persecution; but also in the expansion of the Church. Testimony of Tertullian. Testimony of Anti-Episcopalians.

PART II.

THE CHARACTER AND POSITION OF PRIMITIVE BISHOPS.

CHAPTER IV.

The Primitive Bishop in his individual Character pp. 77—103

§ 1. Method of Appointment; its gradual modification. Qualifications of the Bishop. Age. Previous Church Membership; and Ministry. Election: Consecration: Letters communicatory. A single Bishop in each See. Exceptions.

§ 2. Functions and Authority. Local: yet Apostolic. No mere congregational President. The Episcopal a distinct Order in kind. Objections. S. Jerome's language. Offices peculiar to the Bishop. He acted by independent, the clergy by deputed, authority. Testimony of Ignatius, Tertullian, Ambrose. Internal Economy and Discipline: Revenues: Synods: all under Episcopal control. None exempt from Episcopal government. How far responsible to the opinions of his flock. The Bishop seldom acted on his own authority; albeit he might: though not in all matters. Censure of Presbyters. Qualifications of a Christian Bishop.

CHAPTER V.

The mutual relations of Ante Nicene Bishops . 104—126

The systematic subordination hitherto observed finds no continuation in the relations of the members of the Episcopate to each other. *Each* Bishop had a Catholic

interest in the integrity of the Faith; not merely the Presidents of great Churches. The example of S. Hippolytus in his opposition to Zephyrinus and Callistus. Digression on the energy of his conduct and vehemence of his language. It was warranted in such a case by the examples of S. John, Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenæus. Appeal to the Metropolitan; and to the Synod; the only resource in controversy. No supremacy apparent in any single See. Equality and independence of all Bishops. Irresponsibility in questions of mere discipline. Indignation of S. Cyprian at the appeal of Felicissimus to Rome. The Metropolitan and his functions. Summary and explicit statement of the Ante Nicene relations of different Bishops. Why the Episcopal College was not, like the Church at large, governed by gradations of internal subordination.

CHAPTER VI.

*On the Position of the Bishop of Rome in the first
Three Centuries 127—160*

Reasons why our inquiry must not close without a review of one Church in more detail. Method twofold; direct, with respect to events in which the Bishop of Rome bore a part; indirect, in which he must have played a conspicuous part if he had enjoyed any supremacy. Digression on the validity of negative evidence. Infallibility could not in the Ante Nicene Age have been attributed to a Church which was not entirely free from heresy. Instances. The early Church of Rome not opulent, nor in all respects so important as is sometimes supposed. Titles of familiarity and equality pass between the Roman and other Bishops. The primacy which the Roman Pontiff did enjoy, was that conceded by voluntary

courtesy to an elder brother. Grounds of that precedence; partly Apostolic origin, partly civil importance of the city, and (in subsequent ages) mainly the secular relations of the Empire. Argument *à silentio*: of the Apostles; of the Apostolic Fathers. Rome not the only Petrine Church. Testimony of Tertullian as to reverence to Apostolic Sees. Historic incidents of the Cyprianic age. Marcian. The Rebaptization Controversy. Basilides. Similar conclusions from the Paschal Controversy. Paul of Samosata. No allusion to Papal claims in ancient summaries of Doctrine and Discipline. The necessity of the investigation in support of our *positive* Protestant character.

APPENDIX.

On the rise and prerogatives of Metropolitan Bishops.

PART I.

THE GROWTH OF ECCLESIASTICAL SYSTEM.

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PART I.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.

IN times of much difficulty and contest, when thought is free and language high upon topics the most solemn or the most perplexing, there is a peculiar relief for the patient student in the contemplation of the Past. I speak not of that wayward temper with which men of sober rather than sanguine intellect are apt to turn in weariness and disgust from the follies of their own discordant age, that they may feed their fancy on dreams of golden epochs which never existed; though this is no unnatural tendency in minds more contemplative than inventive. I do not allude to the peculiar idiosyncrasy which leads some dispositions to dwell more on the pictures of retrospection than of an imagined future: though such a habit of mind is surely both intelligible and defensible; and

there are men, in whose souls anticipation is well-nigh quenched, and to whom little save memory remains. No, it is neither in peevish fretfulness, nor in despair, nor yet entirely in the gratification of an individual temperament, that a healthy study of history is to be undertaken. But let recourse be had to it in candor of mind, and a fair desire of learning lessons of practical utility, and the student will find both solid instruction and sure solace in his labors. Let us fix our regard on days long gone by, with no desire to depreciate our own by the ceaseless institution of a comparison ever unfavorable and ever unthankful, but with the hearty purpose of drawing thence the experience which shall best enable us to bear with and to meet the difficulties which surround us, and we shall not lose our reward.

For it is not merely the antiquary and the querulous *laudator temporis acti*, that will find satisfaction in the contemplation of ancient times and ancient men. There are real and weighty reasons, which make such a study of no less import to the man whose most earnest sympathies are enlisted for the fortunes

of his own contemporaries, and whose anticipations of the future are most bright. There is obviously a very great advantage attending the study of men and manners now no more, in that the great actors whose career is thus unfolded to us enacted parts which were independent of the accidents of our own epoch. They were free from those *particular* views, those *particular* features, and those *particular* interests, which so imperceptibly and powerfully influence and prejudice us in our estimate of passing scenes. They had, of course, the like infirmities, and the like peculiarities distorted their mental vision, and oftentimes warped their better judgment: but these infirmities and these peculiarities, though like were not the *same* with ours, and accordingly we more easily divest them of these their accidents, and listen more impartially to the verdict which their conduct or their teaching may render on the grand questions which in all ages stir the soul of man.

And, moreover, the Past is tangibly and definitely *our own*. We make use of the history of all time, and so we indefinitely multiply our limited experience; and enable our-

selves to form wider generalisations and inductions than we could otherwise have aimed at, based too on data more sure and more tried than such as are afforded by the confused aspect that we have of the Present, or the visionary speculations which we devise for the Future.

It is proposed in the following Chapters to enter upon one of the most deeply interesting periods of the world's history, so far at least as it concerns certain outward features of the most glorious and enduring of the world's institutions. I shall attempt, with whatever imperfections, at least faithfully to illustrate the character and to investigate the position of THE EPISCOPATE in the Ante Nicene period OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

My method will be more fully explained in another section. It may, however, be well to state at once, and to state distinctly, that few or no attempts will be made at deducing inferences from the principles which I may exhibit as those of the first three centuries. The intimate bearing of such conclusions as may be established upon the vital questions of our day will be obvious; but no attempt

shall be here made to enforce or to apply them. I conceive that it is not strictly within the scope of the subject, nor yet consistent with the nature of this Essay, that such application should be attempted. I am sure it is not compatible with either the age, experience, or abilities of its Author.

It were indeed a natural and an inviting course to proceed from facts and ascertained principles to their practical import and their modern worth. The refraining from such a plan necessarily impairs the interest otherwise attaching to an inquiry which must, of course, prove of significant import in its bearing on controversies of the day. But our present investigations shall be as free from speculation and as closely historical as possible. I desire that I may not be considered responsible for every opinion, or the advocate of every transaction which I may have to adduce in order to establish points of historical interest. I have endeavoured to come to the study of the Church history of the first three ages without prejudice, and to accept its facts without reserve. I shall endeavour to set them forth in a similar spirit.

Little indeed would be the value of historical research if it were not to lead to legitimate inference and practical conclusions. But these deductions and applications should, I think, be made very cautiously and carefully, and are not to be assumed, far less to be laid aside, with the particular investigations in hand. At all events they are, generally speaking, without the province of this treatise.

There is indeed one subject of peculiar modern interest on which it will be impossible to conceal the voice and verdict of antiquity. The following investigations into the nature of early episcopacy will be conducted with an especial regard to the history of the Roman See. Apart from all considerations of English history and national interest, the position of the Church of Rome and the primary part she has taken in all that concerns the modern history of Europe, forces her ancient condition upon the attention of every reader of early ecclesiastical authors. But why should we attempt to limit ourselves to a merely general contemplation of what must possess for every English Churchman so peculiar an in-

terest as the Roman claims? The effort to appear on such a topic impassive or disinterested, could only wear the semblance of affectation. No member of the Anglican Church can at any time enter on the investigation of the primitive relations of Rome and other Christian Churches, without feelings of the liveliest emotion. For, on the fair and honest conclusions to which he will be conducted, must the momentous question hinge, "Am I, or am I not, *in Schism*?"

Such must at all times be the importance of the inquiries on which we are to enter. But they wear an air of very peculiar significance at this time. The Roman claims have been recently urged on us, and presented before us, with a bold pertinacity unknown to Englishmen since the happy time when our Reformers cast them off. And from whatever causes, and with whatever circumstances of extenuation, such claims have been conceded by men of our own household; till it can scarcely surprise us that imputations of vanity, infatuation, or even of treachery, have been freely heaped upon men whose character and attainments entitle them to respect and sor-

rowing pity, when we can no longer yield them sympathy. Thus circumstances, both of external aggression and internal default, make the scrutiny of Romish pretensions to be just now one of exceeding interest.

Moreover, light has recently been thrown upon early Church history, and more particularly on the primitive attitude of the Roman See, which opens to us new material for our argument. Whether we consider his circumstances of time, of place, or of opportunity, the English Churchman of the Nineteenth Century will appear to have a more than usual concern in the question of Papal Supremacy; a question at all times of more than common interest.

But while we do not pretend to an impartiality on such a theme which neither can nor ought to exist, we may yet deny our conclusions to be foregone. The writer of these pages is at all events sensible that while he was fully persuaded, before he entered on these labors, of the falsity of the Papal claims, he has yet derived an accession of confidence and finality of conviction from his own personal and independent research, which is

cheaply purchased by the toil it has induced. We do not affect to enter with indifference—"impartiality" in such matters is but an equivalent term—on the discussion of a question closely touching our own position in the Church Catholic; but let us indignantly deny that our prejudices are of a nature to disable us from judging of the value and validity of such new evidence as recent discoveries have laid before us. A sure and sober conviction of the security of our principles and position may give us *à priori* certainty as to the result of a new course of inquiry; whether it be new in itself, or only new to those whom other studies and other duties awhile preclude from such investigation. Yet it would be folly to deny that the reason gathers fresh satisfaction when it is led anew, by an independent track, to results of which it was already assured. The strength of a conviction is enhanced, and the mind grasps it with more vigorous hold, when it is reached with equal certainty from different sides.

Such I believe to be the advantages to be derived from a careful attention to primitive Christianity, regarded as an organized system.

The principles of the Reformation have their stronghold in a citadel more impregnable than that even of ancient Christianity; in the Word of God, from which the Church of every age draws its warrant and defence. But I know of no line of argument which can supply exactly the *same kind* of conviction with that drawn from primitive practice: nor is there any other method which can in any degree support the *historical basis* of our own Catholicity.

SECTION II.

BEFORE we enter upon a minute survey of the materials in our possession from which we are to seek for satisfactory information on our subject matter, it will be convenient to indicate the means at our disposal, and the method proper to be pursued.

Now the readiest method of making ourselves acquainted with any historical question is to consult the writings of historians, closely following the epoch to which the question belongs. And a more satisfactory though less facile proceeding is that of studying the writings of various authors holding different positions and representing different interests during the period with the internal condition of which we seek to be familiarised. This latter course is less direct, but on that very ground is more conclusive than an appeal to professed historians. If we can verify our conclusions by a consilience of inductions drawn from sources widely different, and perhaps at first sight unpromising; if we find *incidental and*

undesigned testimony bearing out the principles we have approximately ascertained from other considerations; we feel a conviction of a higher order than that derived from the assertions of men professedly treating of the principles in question, although their testimony be coincident, and its numerical authority large.

Now there are no ecclesiastical historians of the Ante Nicene period who have left any works to our own age. We are then driven to have recourse for all our knowledge of that æra to writers not chroniclers by profession. The field of our research is very wide; indeed it cannot propose to exclude any class of early writers. Our conclusions must be based on evidence more diffuse and more indirect, but yet, as has been already remarked, all the more cogent in proportion as it is less palpably designed to subserve a given end.

In the absence of any direct treatises on the Episcopal office and position, as it obtained during the three centuries of the Church's first life, we must consult the writings of all men in whose works any allusions to the organization of the Christian commu-

nity are to be found. The works thus subjected to our attentive notice are manifold and diverse. Epistles of sub-apostolic men; accounts of persecutions, confessors, and martyrdoms; formal treatises on points of doctrine and of discipline; correspondence between distant Churches on topics of common interest; homilies and commentaries; and even forged¹ writings pretending to be such as the above; may all be put in requisition.

It were much to be desired that we could have had more testimony to the condition of the Church from hostile sources than we possess. As it is, the writings of heretics must be pressed into the service of orthodoxy. Our evidence would be yet more irrefragable if we could adduce pagan witness in anything approaching the extent to which we shall find the writings of Christian authors to be available. If this is not possible, it must be borne in mind that the reason is, that such writings

¹ Indeed there may be cases in which a forged document may testify to some particular conclusion more forcibly than it could do if genuine. It may, for example, attest the continuance of some practice to *the period in which it was written, and, à fortiori, to the earlier period in which it professes to have been composed.*

but scantily exist, and not that such writings fail to support us to the full extent in which they do exist. This will appear more clearly in the sequel.

It will be proper here to explain the limits and the method by which our inquiry will be conducted. And first, with reference to the period of time to be brought under review. The title of this essay announces a discussion on 'The Character and Position of Christian Bishops during the first Three Centuries.' I have ventured to define the first three centuries as terminating at the opening of the great Council of Nicæa, A.D. 325, rather than with the year 299. I have done this, partly because the Christian Church dates its commencement from our Lord's ascension rather than His birth, and consequently its first three ages properly cover the first quarter of the third century. But the main reason why I select the first Œcumenical Council as the term of our research, is that the assembling of that glorious Synod marks the completion of the grand drama of the early Church. The year 325 marks a real catastrophe, a true epoch. With it the Church is exhibited in

her full energy and maturity. She has but now emerged from the mass of cloud which has from her rising rendered her light at times obscure and partial, and has hitherto screened her from pouring her full flood of direct and visible splendor over the earth with that expansive energy which is one of her characteristic notes. At length she is exalted unto honor. At length she culminates on her meridian: alas, too soon to wane again, and be again obscured by earth-born mist. But at this instant we mark a crisis. The external and internal development of the Church's functions is complete. Her outward discipline is knit together in a wonderful order and harmony. Her organization is matured. And she now applies herself to the correction and adjustment of dogmatic doctrine. Her first united effort is in a cause worthy of the Bride of Christ, of which she alone could be worthy—it is, to vindicate His eternal and divine honor.

Nothing further need be said, to prove the propriety of regarding the Nicene Council as the true termination of the first three centuries. But it may be observed that so well

defined an epoch is of peculiar value as bounding a period which contains much of vagueness and want of precision in its details of time and circumstance, however well ascertained we shall discover its general outlines to be.

It is much to be regretted that we have such scanty materials for a detailed view of the period in question. Our sources of information are varied, and trustworthy. But they are eminently unsystematic, and utterly inadequate to afford us a complete and consecutive account of the times which they illustrate. In dealing with a store of materials which are too often meagre or discontinuous, and which nowhere bear the impress of shape and system, a somewhat unsystematic method must be excused. We must be content to seize on evidence just as it may come to hand, sometimes positive and direct, but more often of negative significance; especially with reference to the particular See to be more attentively regarded. We must not attempt to limit ourselves with rigor to authorities strictly contemporaneous with the epoch under examination. On such indeed we shall

mainly rely, and the testimony of such we shall highest prize. But let us not decline information which we may glean concerning the Ante Nicene age from the writings of men a few years subsequent to its close. Indeed (as we have already noticed with respect to spurious works) we may often use their evidence with *à fortiori* force. Corruptions and pretensions which can be shewn to have had no existence and to have received no notice in the fourth century, may be safely inferred to have been unknown in the third.

I have thought it right to be explicit, perhaps even tedious, in the explanation of my object and method. I shall only add that I sincerely trust that I may not be misunderstood as adopting for my own the sentiments of any writer whom I may quote, excepting where my adherence to them is expressed. Much less would I be considered as instituting any comparison between the Church of Antiquity and of our own age. My investigations are to be regarded as historical and not controversial. My office and essay may be on that account the less interesting: they will, at all events, be the less presumptuous.

CHAPTER II.

The Primitive Church considered as a System.

SECTION I.

IT would, doubtless, have excited the admiring surprise of one of S. Paul's early converts, if he could have revisited the Church in which he died, and beheld the fair proportions and systematic form which it had attained two hundred years after he left its little company of faithful men, bound together by a common baptism, a common faith, and common hopes, but little conscious of any precise shape or organization. It could not have been otherwise than marvellous to find a distinct Society; with a complete and definite Constitution; administered by regular and recognised Pastors, no longer owning the allegiance and affection of their flock as a matter of mere course, no longer receiving the simple unquestioning attachment of their children in Christ, but exhibiting well authenticated

credentials, and vindicating their claim to well understood rights by an unbroken and undoubted commission of which they could enumerate every link, even to the very Apostle himself by whom our imaginary spectator had been christened and confirmed. Strange, in many respects, would he deem the change in the magnitude and fortunes of the earthly division of his Communion. Perhaps none would startle him more than to see that fraternity which he left supporting an existence, save for God's promise, entirely precarious; tied together by the simple, yet vital bond of Gospel truth; learning under apostolic guidance the hard lesson of renouncing ancient prejudices, Pagan or Judaic; or referring, with filial submissiveness, their infant difficulties to apostolic adjustment;—now wearing a more majestic mien, and exhibiting in its outward form a manly dignity and the independence of maturity. He might indeed be startled at first sight; but he would soon recognise in all things but the full growth of that order of which apostolic hands had moulded the embryo, or of which apostolic example had suggested the type. He would marvel

with awe and a thankful heart, as he took notice whereunto those things had grown, of which he had accepted the germs as a matter of course. He would perceive that a developement of Apostolic discipline was no less necessary to the *being* of a gigantic frame, such as that to which the grain of mustard seed had attained, than the maintenance of Evangelical truth was to its *well being*: and that indeed the preservation of the latter was not possible without the exercise of the former. And on a close examination, he would declare that there was no one element in this wondrous scheme of unity which was not the legitimate expansion of some archetype, perhaps little heeded at the time, in the Apostolic rule under which he had lived.

We shall not linger long on the all-important question, how far Holy Scripture was designed to prescribe any particular form of Church government, or what incidental conclusions are deducible from it on this subject. It is not our task just now to enter into the general argument for Episcopacy, its universal acceptance, and its divine right. But in the brief sketch of the developement of Church

system which this Chapter professes to give, it is necessary to set out by mentioning a few of the earliest traces of its nascent state. Without insisting very strongly on the independent controversial worth of such incidents as the following, the Episcopalian traces with satisfaction and interest the very first symptoms of an Ecclesiastical organization which can be discovered in the New Testament. He does not conceive that it was the purpose of inspired Writ to lay down a definite code of Canon Law or hierarchical subordination; but it is not with unconcern that he notices its incidental support of his theory and the Church's universal system. He marks, as no trifle or accident, but with reverence, that our blessed Lord ever drew a marked distinction between "The Twelve," and His other ordained Disciples. They were distinguished in the time and the manner of their ordination; in the terms of their commission; in the intimacy and the privileges to which they were admitted; in the promise of perpetual guidance and aid. And as it became necessary to fill up or to enlarge the Apostolic College, it is to be observed how carefully the choice

was made, and the commission conveyed. If any man might, from the circumstances and certainty of his divine Call, have dispensed with the ceremonial of outward ordination, that person was surely S. Paul. But favored though he was, he could not be sent to the Gentiles without a regular mission and commission. The Holy Ghost condescended to give express injunctions for the Ordination; and after prayer and fasting, the heads of the Church at Antioch laid their hands on him, and he was constituted Apostle of the Gentiles.

It is worthy of remark that the only express treatises on the Pastoral Office which have been left us by inspired authors,—the Pastoral Epistles to two of the immediate successors of the Apostles—emanated from S. Paul. A man, the infirmities of whose judgment were uncorrected by divine aid, would probably have been induced by the special circumstances of his own extraordinary and informal vocation, to underrate the value of systematic order in the appointment of his successors. Not so with the inspired Apostle. The letters to the first Bishops of Crete and

of Ephesus shew a high estimate of Ecclesiastical discipline, and a determination to enforce it. From them we gather no inadequate idea of the position of a Sub-apostolic Bishop. By what *name* indeed the office borne by Timothy and Titus was technically called, as successors to the Apostles, is not quite clear. They seem to have been called Evangelists, Angels, Bishops, Presbyters; according as there was any or no emphasis to be thrown on their pre-eminence with relation to other clergy; according as the nature of the office or the prerogative of the officer were uppermost in the mind. But of the powers entrusted to these persons a good idea may be formed from the study of the Epistles addressed to them. They had Apostolic authority to arrange the ritual of Divine Worship, and to maintain discipline and order in the congregation. They had instructions as to whom they should select as Elders and Deacons. They had commission to hear and decide on accusations alleged against their Clergy. They were to exhort and rebuke with all authority, and to suffer none to forget the dignity of the office in the youth of its

occupant. Finally, they were to be the general instructors of their flocks, and to expel obstinate heretics from their pale.

These representations must be allowed to be fairly drawn from the documents themselves. Was there anything in this close approximation to systematic government inconsistent with the "universal priesthood" of God's children? A little consideration may elucidate this question.

Perhaps there were few characteristics of distinction between the Jewish and the Christian Economies more decided than this common priesthood. This was more visibly and outwardly exemplified in the infancy of the Christian Church when God's Spirit was poured out in such marvellous and mighty manner on whole congregations of converts. The co-operation and common priesthood of all Christian people was evidenced to the senses when by God's miraculous effusion of *charismata* it pleased Him for His Church's good to grant diversities of gifts by immediate inspiration, and to summon by a real Divine Call this or that individual to give utterance to His Word, whether under the influence of

the originating, the interpretative, or the critical faculty. But even in Apostolic times, these unarranged and informal modes of instruction and of witness began to fall under some sort of technical scheme and method. To each in his place it became necessary to reserve and appropriate the exercise of his peculiar gift—on all it was incumbent to study decent order, and to submit to their regularly constituted spiritual guides. And even these wonderful gifts, these marks of God's especial favor and personal manifestation are declared inferior to the bond of UNITY, that CHARITY which cometh from above, and is the sum and substance of Christian grace.

It is not a little remarkable that among these *charismata*, and classed with gifts of spiritual manifestation is that of government (*χάρισμα κυβερνήσεως*). The organization of the Church and the subordination and relation of its various members and functionaries might hence appear to have originated entirely in its own spontaneity. But it must be remembered that these extraordinary gifts were all under the guidance and at the disposal of the Church's Head—and this consi-

deration being steadily borne in mind, it will be no longer marvellous, it will appear simply natural and requisite that the χάρισμα κυβερνήσεως should exhibit itself in the same form and fall into the same symmetry throughout the world. Under immediate inspiration and Apostolic direction it was no less certain that the external organization of the Christian Commonwealth would be similar and symmetrical, than that the purport of prophesyings and interpretations would be identical, however the disciplinary faculty in the one case and the didactic or the hortatory in the other might appear to take its rise in the uncertain and disconnected impulses of individual consciousness.

The germ then of Church organization is to be found in the natural and systematic form into which Christian communities everywhere arranged themselves—centering themselves each around their spiritual guides by an unconstrained yet necessary process—in harmony and symmetry such as may be seen when from extraneous causes, different and slight, a fluid surface blossoms into multitudinous crystals, each perfect, each the coun-

terpart of its fellow in form and figure, however widely distinct in size and position. The predisposition lay hid in every particle ; it was summoned into actual form, here by a breath, there by external agitation, in a third place without patent cause.

We cannot then accept the theory which regards each Church as the conglomerate of many minor bodies, families and households, possessing no unity, no individuality, no existence *of its own*, but simply constituted by the aggregation of smaller subdivisions, themselves the mere sum total of independent and individual units. According to this view, the difficulties and disputes inevitably consequent on so divided and disconnected a society gave rise to the institution and fostered the growth of an episcopal government. We believe that the Unity of the Church was spiritual, vital, inherent ; and not an artificial and assumed uniformity. We consider that the genius of Christianity, the rule of the Apostolic College, the divinely ordered sequence of events, all impressed on the Christian body that system and shape which it everywhere assumed. We find this conviction strengthened and demon-

strated by primitive history. The constitution of the Christian Polity is far too glorious, too complete, too Catholic, to have had its rise in disruption. It is the creation of beauty and order, not of infirmity and discord. It is the Idea,—not the Antidote.

SECTION II.

WE have traced even in the earliest part of the Church's existence, even in the times of Apostolic Rule and Scriptural Narrative, the fore-shadowing of a grand system of order which should present itself in more prominent form as the sphere of the Church enlarged, and as the needs of the Church demanded.

We proceed now to mark the uniformity with which that order unfolded itself in its complete majesty. Already have we noticed in the cases of Timothy and of Titus that the Apostles had taken means to give the true form to the government of the infant Church, to assign the functions of the faithful and of their spiritual rulers, and to define their relations, so far as their advancement admitted or their circumstances required. The order of things thus set in energetic operation by their actions, and for which a constant safeguard and testimonial was provided in their inspired injunctions—injunctions which imply the succession and continuity of the constitution as surely as the Epistles conveying them

were intended for all time—this order, I say, took root, and grew, and bore fruit, in a manner which no artificial arrangement can ever imitate. It must have been the true and natural form of Ecclesiastical discipline which gathered strength with the progress of events and with the advance of the communities on which it was imposed. It could have been no adventitious bond of union which adapted itself with so marvellous a flexibility and yet so perfect a symmetry to the requirements of each locality, and to the events of each succeeding age.

If we give credence to the consenting testimony of early tradition, the last surviving of the holy Apostles spent the last days of his life on earth in the divine labors of arranging the canon of the Church's sacred books and of the Church's external organization. Certainly there can be no improbability in the story. What more natural than that the last link which maintained the visible unity of the glorious company with the Church of their formation, should be such offices of watchful care as were thus exemplified in S. John's closing labors: labors which ensured to the

“heavenbound ship” both an unerring chart, and authorized pilots to steer her amid the untried waters of her future course. That intimate relations subsisted between this Apostle and the Bishops of Asia Minor is further attested by the tradition that it was at their urgent request that he undertook the composition of the Apocalypse; and that no less than seven of them are selected for Apostolic admonition in that inspired treatise.

We are now launched upon the second century. The last of the holy college of those that had companied with our Lord has been called to his mansion by his Master, and the Church is left (to all outward appearance) on her own resources: not however without the inward strength afforded by the constant presence of her divine Head; and the outward security of a form moulded and consolidated by the hands of His servants, and provided by them with the conservative principles of self-expansion, and a permanent commission of successive guardians.

Of the condition of the Church at this epoch we are fortunately able to ascertain more satisfactory evidence than we can pro-

cure in subsequent times. The small but invaluable collection of documents which are known as the works of the Apostolic Fathers give us an insight into the period immediately following the Apostles themselves, scanty indeed and more general than in detail, but perfectly trustworthy and of extraordinary interest. From these authors, and especially from Ignatius, whose epistles will demand a more close scrutiny by and bye, and from later accounts of the second century we gather that, under external pressure of the most strenuous and trying nature, the Church not only maintained the Faith of her God, but was as a city at unity with itself at least. The severity of persecution might check frequent and regular intercommunion of different Churches. It is however on that account the more significant that the same order grew and prevailed in all. No calamities from without could mar the unity of the Church herself: and primitive unity was of a kind which did not scorn uniformity. The general rule of government was everywhere unquestioned and the same. One single Bishop presided over each Church. There was no longer ambiguity about the title

of his office. To the possessor of those Apostolic functions which had ever been confined to *one* person in each Church, however varied his appellations, convention now affixed the unvarying technical name of Episcopus. He was elected by the common suffrage of all communicants. His presbytery constituted his council: a staff, not limited in numbers, but depending for their several positions ultimately and entirely on his authority.

There was as yet little interdependence or intercommunication between different Churches: nor were the mutual relations of each with the rest very explicitly ascertained. No doubt a natural deference was conceded in cases of difficulty, to those which could claim Apostles for their founders. But why was this? chiefly because it was considered that they were the more likely to have received and maintained Apostolic traditions. It was not because of any inherent right, it was because they had been in closer proximity with inspired teachers, that the Church at large paid this tribute of regard and reverence (but never of submissive obedience) to the more ancient

strongholds of the Faith¹. Let it be observed, in passing, that this was a reason, the cogency of which would decline rather than increase, as the lapse of time bore all Christian communities alike away from the Apostolic age.

But sympathy of interests and considerations of mutual convenience, gradually combined and confederated the churches in each province. No sooner had ecclesiastical affairs reached this stage, than the necessity of stated conventions appeared. Accordingly the Synod, at which matters of common interest might be discussed, and to which matters of commonweal might be referred, came into being. The Synod of the Greek Church, and the Council in the West, had such obvious recommenda-

¹ It is impossible to avoid thus anticipating, in the rough outline here given of the primitive condition of the Church, the general conclusions to which a more rigorous and detailed method will hereafter guide us. I shall not attempt to sacrifice the natural to the artificial arrangement, or to affect ignorance of historic features like those here delineated, because their accuracy is proved in later Chapters. If it seem necessary to quote any authorities here, reference may be made to Irenæus *adv. Hæres.* iii. 3; Tertull. *de Præscr.* 36; Kaye's Tertullian, 236.

tions, were so in accordance with Apostolic precedent, and proved of so true service, that the system was rapidly and universally introduced. Provincial assemblies were usually held twice in a year; while ordinary business was transacted by epistolary correspondence between the various members of the Episcopal College.

There can be no doubt that this system strengthened the hands of the Bishops, and extended while it confirmed their influence. But this was a result far from formidable to the early Church. With Bishops of such simplicity and such entire self-devotedness, there was little to apprehend from priestly domination. And in the circumstances of Church history during the second century, there was little leisure for speculative jealousy as to the rights, prerogatives, and limitations of Episcopal Rule.

We shall see more clearly in the next Chapter, how the peculiar circumstances of the times, both directly and indirectly, contributed to the developement of Episcopal authority. We are at present concerned with the more general and abstract form of the external sys-

tem of Christianity, than with its special features; though I have not refrained from sketching out these (albeit in the roughest and most imperfect manner) even at this stage of our considerations. What I wish in closing this summary view of the rise of visible system in the Church to insist upon, is that some definite shape and form was necessary, in order to realise and embody the vital and spiritual union which animated the Church. Its mode of developement differed from that of all human institutions, yet did not scorn to appropriate and assimilate in its own constitution, the noblest elements in many phases of human life and government. It at length offered in visible form to the eyes of men, that Polity whereof Plato¹ hinted that the archetype existed in heaven, and that the realisation must be drawn from thence. From the subjective consciousness of primitive Christianity was that glorious idea gradually evolved and put in evidence. Its objective form was the external projection of the internal feeling of necessary unity, union, and communion; in a word, of Catholicity; which kindled every

¹ Plato, Republic, ix.

Christian heart. It was, moreover, the absolutely necessary *medium* for giving expression and affording expansion to that internal feeling. Thus the divine idea, wrought out in and with the human element, and not independently of human needs, gave a determinate form of constitution to that organism of which the lineaments are now, *à posteriori*, easily traced in Holy Scripture, and of which the prototype was really modelled in Apostolic hands. Thus proceeded the outward manifestation of the Church from within man's spirit; in no arbitrary or accidental method, but as we have already seen, in accordance with necessary and divine laws, under divine energy, and in close conformity to the divine model.

A little thought will shew that it is not gratuitous mysticism which suggests the above sketch of the progressive manifestation of the visible Church. Some such theory is surely necessary to explain and to combine the facts of the *growth* of Church system, and the truth of its divine original and right. Such thoughts may help to reconcile the certain fact that the

Church did not start into being fully fashioned into rigid shape, with the equally certain theory that the organization towards which she so steadily and quickly approximated was no mere human structure.

CHAPTER III.

The Episcopal Element in Early Church system.

SECTION I.

THE progressive formation of the Constitution of the Christian Church in the second and third centuries, has been handled in a very philosophical manner by Neander. To the facts he produces, and to the general outline of the narrative into which he weaves them, no objections can be taken. But in the conclusions which he draws, the light in which he regards the phænomena of the period, and the interpretation he accordingly puts upon them, we may by no means concur. Dr Neander recognises (as we shall soon see that no fair historian can fail to recognise) the most marked feature of the progress of Church system in the increasing definiteness with which the Episcopus is now distinguished from the Presbyter. He allows, as we have already observed, that “even in the latter years of

S. Paul's labors, we see many things taking a different shape [i. e. assuming more visibly their true shape, as it appears to *us*]—a different shape from what they had originally." Indeed, he does not deny that one great object of S. John's residence in Asia Minor, was to entrust to certain individual presbyters "the chief care and an oversight over the whole Church." We concur with him in the remark, that "there is no necessity of inferring from this circumstance that an episcopate was designedly *founded by this* [or any one] Apostle."

This learned and eminently philosophic historian sketches the internal constitution of the Church in the Cyprianic age, and his sketch is one to which we need offer little objection. The judgment which he passes on the origin and tendency of the developement he so well portrays, is that to which we must demur. "Without being conscious of any plan, Cyprian acted in the spirit of a whole party, and of a tendency belonging to the entire Church in his time. He acted as the representative of the episcopal system, whose conflict with the presbyterian policy had its

ground in the whole developement of the Church. The *struggle* between the Episcopal and the Presbyterian systems, are perhaps the most important phænomenon in the development of the Church during the third century. The *triumph* of the Episcopal system undoubtedly promoted unity, order, and tranquillity¹." We shall, I think, see as we proceed, that there is nothing to find fault with in these pregnant remarks, save the unfavorable and invidious aspect—one, namely, of unseemly rivalry—in which they represent the most glorious epoch of the Church's history. Indeed, nothing but an unconscious warping of facts, to suit the model of a pre-adopted theory, could have induced a writer of Dr Neander's stamp to characterize as unfriendly the relations between the orders of the Christian Clergy in the Cyprianic age. And thus it is that we find this candid philosopher of Christian Politics introducing his theories in such formulæ as the following: "The Presidency of the Presbyterian College was, perhaps, so arranged as to follow some law of rotation....It is possible that, in many places, such was the original

¹ Neander's Church History, Vol. I. p. 268.

arrangement. *Yet we find no trace, in history at least, of anything of the kind*¹. The tradition current at the end of the second century, of individuals having been placed by S. John at the head of different Churches, and by him consecrated Bishops, *may* have been derived from, &c. &c.”

Now we must be pardoned if we accept the accounts which ancient writers give us of their own period, and decline to adopt the hypothetic possibilities which *may* have given to the facts they narrate an aspect the reverse of that which they obviously suggest.

Let us then turn for ourselves to such sources of information as their narratives afford, and judge from the evidence whether the element which we have noticed as playing so prominent a part in the early formation of Ecclesiastical Polity was, or was not, an element of disunion; whether it arose in a manifestation of rivalry and partizanship, and whether its features do not entitle it to further scrutiny.

And with respect to the relations of Epis-

¹ p. 264. He immediately applies the same remark (as to want of evidence) to the opposite view.

copacy to the Unity of the early Church, the only difficulty one has in dealing with the question arises from the multifarious ways in which it forces itself on our notice, and from the necessary obstacles which prevent our altogether accommodating modern to ancient habits of thought. The Unity of ancient Christianity was for awhile so entire, that minds familiarised with it, as were those of the older Fathers, seem to have been unable to separate, even in thought, the being of the Church from its outward oneness. And the functions and efficiency of the Episcopate were such that, to their contemplation, the Episcopal Constitution and the Unity of the Church were identical qualities of its essence. Allowance for forms of thought and diction belonging to an age so entirely different from our own must, of necessity, be conceded in the study of the ancient writers. Let us transport ourselves into their circumstances and their education, when we would estimate aright the features of their times; and we shall be no longer startled by their modes of expression. "In their reckoning, unity was the great badge of Christianity. God heard

the prayers that were put up in unity, but not those that were performed in schism. Nothing afforded greater pleasure to the angels in Heaven, says Firmilianus¹, than harmony among Christians on earth. It were easy to collect a thousand such testimonies concerning the excellency of unity²." Indeed the laws of one Communion were earnestly maintained and asserted by the early Christians as no less necessary to their existence than the laws of one Faith. And the Episcopal College was regarded as the fraternity of absolute conservators—the *φύλακες παντελείς* of these Laws. "The Episcopal system (says ³Neander) was the outward medium and foundation of the outward unity of the Church." The Bishop was the source and centre of unity to his own particular Church. He was the Sun, and the members of his Church the beams; he the root, and they the branches; he the fountain, and they the streams⁴. In what manner he was thus the life of his visible Congregation

¹ Ep. inter Cyprianicas, LXXV. p. 217.

² Sage's Cyprianic age, I. 25.

³ I. 291.

⁴ Cyprian de Unitate Eccl. p. 195. Bened. Ed.

will appear more distinctly in the Chapter which treats of his individual functions and authority. Such, however, is S. Cyprian's account of his office and its efficiency. Such were the feelings of one who bore the charge himself, and who acquitted himself in such wise as to be the model and the admiration of every age; of one who had to contend with superhuman difficulties, and who overcame them, fighting in superhuman strength; of one who wonderfully united zeal and discretion, decision with modesty; and who sealed an Apostolic episcopate by a Pauline martyrdom. We shall find in his writings the most complete testimony within our reach, both as to the individual obligations and functions of Christian Bishops, and as to their mutual relations. Let not the witness of one who played so active a part in the times under our notice be lightly passed, as couched in antiquated or in high-flown terms. Let not the character of the Martyr be sullied by the imputation of prelatial ambition. S. Cyprian is perhaps the most valuable of all the writers of antiquity as bearing on our quarrel with Rome. Let us not then slight his account of the Church affairs

of his own time, however we may be startled by the force of expression with which he insists on notions not very familiar to the nineteenth century¹.

The Bishop then was the keystone in the fabric of the portion of the visible Church over which he presided. Nor was he the tie of Union only in the relation of the faithful communicants with each other and himself. Was any desirous of admission to the fellowship of Christ's Church? From the Bishop was considered to flow all the authority necessary for his² initiation. Had any who had fallen from the Church's pale manifested a contrite desire to be reconciled to her peace? The schismatic, whether lay or clerical, must be reconciled to the Bishop; and he was then *ipso facto* restored to the Communion of the

¹ Non me terret auctoritas Cypriani, quia reficit humilitas Cypriani, said S. Augustine [de Baptismo contra Donat. ii. 1.] On the gentleness of S. Cyprian's character, see Appendix to Poole's S. Cypr. against Rome, p. 217. Also the first vol. of Milner's Church History, a large portion of which is devoted to an account of this noble bishop.

² According to the celebrated witness of Tertullian, more fully considered hereafter. "Jus quidem dandi, &c."

whole Catholic Church. Thus Victor, a lapsed presbyter, was restored by his Bishop, Therapinus of Bulla in proconsular Africa. The absolution was ratified by a synod of sixty-six Bishops, of whom S. Cyprian was one, and declared to be valid and sufficient. Nor was it by his own congregation merely that his authority was thus recognised. Christian privileges were precious in those days, both on account of internal discipline and external oppression. Hence the wayfaring man, the merchant, and the soldier were careful to pre-arrange with prudential forethought for their spiritual needs during their absence from the Church of their baptism and communion. To their Bishop they had recourse for letters commendatory, which should serve as a passport to Christian rights and Christian charities wherever the Christian name was known. And when they reached a strange city, their first inquiry was for the Bishop of the Church therein : and so soon as they produced these *literæ*¹ *formatæ* they were greeted with the right hand of fellowship, and supplied both

¹ These *tesserae hospitales* were so called, because to guard against forgery they were drawn up according to a

with spiritual and bodily refreshment. So vital, and so practical was the union of Christians in olden times; and so visibly did it radiate (in its external manifestations) from the chief pastors of the Church.

Indeed, if the manner in which the Church of antiquity was knit together in its Bishops appear strange to us, it would have been yet more strange in the estimation of a Christian of that age to imagine a community of the faithful as possessing any organization whatever without the Episcopus at its head. So very diverse are the impressions fostered by the historic circumstances of different æras. Take an instance of the ancient feeling in this respect.

The eighth among the Cyprianic letters, is one indited by the presbyters of Rome to those of Carthage. Fabianus was no more, and the Archbishop of Carthage had retired before the storm of persecution which broke over his Church—retired not in pusillanimity, but at the earnest instance of his clergy. Here then, if ever, was a likely opportunity

form or cypher. The necessity for this precaution may be learned from Euseb. iv. 23, Cyprian. Ep. iii.

for the independence and sufficiency of the Presbytery to shew itself, had any such sufficiency been dreamed of in early ages. But what do we find to be the historic fact? That the clergy of Rome felt themselves in an anomalous position—as sheep without their legitimate shepherd. They admit in express terms that their own Church and that of their correspondents were acephalous, and carried on by provisional government. They speak of themselves as wielding, in spite of their own desires, an authority which had seemed to devolve upon them through the exigencies of the¹ case—not functions which had been theirs *ab origine*, and which they had delegated to their Bishop.

The Bishop of primitive antiquity was the impersonation of his Church. It is in the recognition of their being the plenary representatives of their Communion, that S. John's language to the Angels of the Asiatic Churches must be interpreted in order to be fully understood. For the message is not delivered *in the form* of exhortation to the Church,

¹ “Et cum incumbat nobis qui videmur præpositi esse, et vice *Pastoris* custodire gregem.”—Ep. VIII. p. 16.

through the Bishop. It is addressed to himself; and yet its purport is most plainly limited to no individual.

It was in the same spirit that, when Cornelius witnessed the good confession of the faith before his pagan persecutors, S. Cyprian says, "The whole Roman Church¹ confessed," as though the Roman Communion were entirely represented in its head.

In the same spirit, S. Ignatius writes to the Church of Ephesus, "I received in the name of God your whole multitude in the person of Onesimus, who for his love hath no word by which he can be described, but according to the flesh is your Bishop²." And again, "And Crocus also, worthy both of God and of you, whom I have received as a pattern of your love...together with Onesimus...in whom I have, as to charity, seen you all³."

¹ "Ecclesia omnis Romana confessa est." — Ep. LX. p. 141.

² τὴν πολυπληθείαν ὑμῶν ἐν ὀνόματι Θεοῦ ἀπέληξα ἐν Ὁνησίμῳ τῷ ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀδιηγῆτῳ, ὑμῶν δὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ἐπισκόπῳ. —Ad Ephes. I.

³ Καὶ Κρόκος δὲ, ὁ Θεοῦ ἄξιος καὶ ὑμῶν, ὃν ἐξεμπλάριον τῆς ἀφ' ὑμῶν ἀγάπης ἀπέλαβον . . . ἅμα Ὁνησίμῳ κ.τ.λ. . . . δι' ὧν πάντας ὑμᾶς κατὰ ἀγάπην εἶδον. —Ad Ephes. II.

And to the Trallians, “Without these [Bishops, Priests, and Deacons] there is no Church. Concerning all which, I am persuaded that ye think after the very same manner. For I have received, and even now have with me, the pattern of your love in your Bishop: whose very look is much instruction, and his mildness power¹.”

And, that we may not overlay our pages with quotations which, however numerous, can never convey in all its force the genuine spirit which the writers breathe throughout their works, we may sum up in the words of Hooker, “It was the generally received persuasion of the ancient Christian Church that *Ecclesia est in Episcopo*².”

It really is scarcely possible to overestimate the close and intimate manner in which the corporate existence of every Church was considered to depend on its Bishop, to flourish or to decay with *his* piety or *his* hetero-

¹ Χωρὶς τούτων [sc. ἐπισκόπου, πρεσβυτέρων, διακόνων] ἐκκλησία οὐ καλεῖται. περὶ ὧν πέπεισμαι ὑμᾶς οὕτω ἔχειν. τὸ γὰρ ἐξεμπλᾶριον τῆς ἀγάπης ὑμῶν ἔλαβον καὶ ἔχω μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ ὑμῶν, οὗ αὐτὸ τὸ κατάστημα μεγάλη μαθητεία, ἡ δὲ πραότης αὐτοῦ δύναμις.—Ad Trall. III.

² Eccl. Pol. VII.

doxy, to be in all things represented by *him and him alone*, so far as its visible earthly life was concerned. Hence it was of the utmost importance to the reputation and fair fame of a Church of professing Christians that they should be governed by a Pastor who could trace an inviolate succession, both of communion and of pure doctrine, from the Apostles' days to his own. To such an extent were the faithful Churches careful to maintain this unimpeachable integrity in their Episcopacy that Tertullian was able to use the possession or the lack of it as a criterion of orthodoxy. He challenges those who professed to plead a pseudo Apostolic Tradition in support of error to establish and vindicate their pretended tradition by an enumeration of the Church officers whom they alleged to have handed it down. "Let them set forth," says he, "the original of their Church; let them exhibit the line of their Bishops in such form that it may appear that the first link in that continuous succession could shew as his authority and his precursor either some actual Apostle or at least some Apostolic man¹."

¹ "Evolvant ordinem Episcoporum suorum ita per suc-

And if the Bishop was the focus of Church communion, the depositary of Church authority, the conservator of Church purity; he took no less prominent a part in Church afflictions. When the sword of the persecutor was unsheathed it was on the Bishop that its edge was fleshed. He was no less the representative of the band whom he held in union and rule when suffering than when at peace. The gates of hell could not indeed prevail against the Bride of Christ. But it was with cunning worthy of hellish rage that the main strength of persecution was directed against the Bishops of the Church. It was not merely that the chief pastor was the chief captain of the militant community—not merely that he was usually the most gifted of all her servants—not merely that he was her most energetic and most formidable champion in offensive or in defensive warfare. No! the pagan persecutor well knew all *this*: but he knew more also. He knew that with the Bishop, the main prop

cessionem ab initio decurrentem, ut primus ille Episcopus aliquem ex Apostolis, vel Apostolicis viris, qui tamen cum Apostolis perseveraverit, habuerit auctorem et antecessorem.”—Tertull. de Præscr. Hæret. 32.

and stay of Church fellowship was gone. He found that in him was realised the brutal wish of a Roman tyrant, "that all he dreaded might have but one common neck;" and he availed himself of his advantage. So far as might be, he sought to fight neither with small nor great, but only with the king of Israel¹.

And thus we see why so valiant a Confessor as S. Cyprian was induced for a while to retire before his enemies. It was not to save himself—his subsequent martyrdom attests his fortitude—but because his presence inflamed the tumult; and it was better for his Church to be temporarily deprived of his presence, than to incur the permanent loss of her visible head.

By his own flock then, and by its bitterest foes, the Bishop was equally regarded as the

¹ Maximinus gave orders in the conduct of the persecution which he originated, that only *οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς*, the chief rulers of the Churches, should be put to death: considering them the authors of the whole propagation of the Gospel.—Eusebius, H. E. vi. 24.

"Cum jampridem per omnes provincias et per urbes singulas ordinati sint Episcopi in ætate antiqui, in fide integri, in pressurâ probati, in persecutione proscripti."—Ep. inter Cyprianicas, LV. p. 112.

focal centre of Ecclesiastical Unity—the representative of his Church—the fountain of discipline, and the responsible guardian of doctrine.

SECTION II.

I THINK we are now in a position to decide whether or no the Episcopal element in the Church developement of the first centuries was a seed of discord, or, on the contrary, among the first principles of Ecclesiastical order. We come now to the second question which we proposed to consider in this Chapter. Was the growth of episcopal power a manifestation of the spirit of ambitious rivalry, or was it unfolded in all its completeness by a natural sequence of events?

The former theory has been recently put forward with some ingenuity by men of much learning and philosophical research. A wide and profound study of Ecclesiastical history has been so rare in England; or at least its results have hitherto been so scanty; that everything like vivid portraiture of the early ages has been abandoned to the Romanist or the German. We have been too generally content with a style of Church history which would not be tolerated in the annals of civil affairs—with a meagre enumeration of facts

scarcely better than a tabulated scheme of events and dates¹. The consequence has been a general neglect of the most interesting and important branch of History : while those students who have had the hardihood and enterprise to give more devoted attention to the subject have been thrown upon the labors of the Romanist and the Lutheran, sources naturally suspected by the Protestant Theologian, and necessarily unsatisfactory to him in their representations of Church Constitution.

Of these two branches of authority, that of the Papist has been, for many reasons, less studied by the ordinary English student. It is therefore to the German—to the opponent of Episcopal order, and (I regret to say) not

¹ With all its acknowledged defects—it does not profess to be a detailed Church History—Milner's work forms an honorable exception to the remark in the text ; and it deserves to be better known.

While we are still obliged to find our resource in the works of foreigners, we can hardly sufficiently congratulate ourselves on having such rich stores of candid and temperate narrative and philosophic thought as we possess in the writings of Fleury and Neander. A more recent work, that of Thiersch, holds out the best promise. I suppose that no man ever felt satisfaction in the laborious and valuable History of Mosheim. To *him* the meed of candor cannot be awarded.

seldom to the impugner of orthodox doctrine, that he is too often led. The first finds a noble representative in Neander. The second has perhaps its type in the recent speculations put forth on S. Hippolytus and his Age.

We can scarcely then be surprised at certain popular misapprehensions, not altogether unfrequent, with reference to the manner in which clerical order obtained in primitive antiquity. The Papist and the Congregationalist are alike interested in representing the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff as the legitimate consequence of primitive Episcopacy. The latter of the two portrays them as alike the results of priest-craft and priest-ambition. And since in popular apprehension, confident assertion is a sufficient as it is a necessary substitute for personal investigation, such misrepresentations too oft pass current.

But is it a fact that the pre-eminence of the Episcopal Order was the work of a designing hierarchy? Was it in the spirit of priestly ambition, and with the energies of competition, that the Bishops of antiquity attained their paramount influence in the Church?

Now, apart from all that has yet been al-

leged and that shall be alleged in the way of history, it might be urged, on purely speculative grounds, that Episcopal control has been a feature of Church system too *Catholic* to be of mere human invention. It has been prominent in *every* age, and in *every* branch of the Church. It has shewn itself under every variety of altered time and place, so that it must be regarded as a Law of the (outward) Church's being. Had it been of man's device it could hardly have been universal: had it been contrived for man's glory it must have come to nought. It has been no *accident* of the Visible Church; it seems to belong to it as though inherent in its very essence. An element of Church authority which has—I will not say taken such kindly hold, but rather has shewn itself so necessary a condition of every phase of Church life, must needs be a *natural* element. It has never been thus with schemes, however consummate, of human contrivance. Take for example the most systematic subordination that has ever appeared—the constitution of the Order of Jesus. Nothing could have been more admirably planned: no scheme could have been energized

by more devoted adherents. Yet it has never been thoroughly assimilated even into the Church which it professes to serve. Wherefore? Because it *was* a plan: because it was contrived for, instead of spontaneously growing out of events.

And in like manner a rigorous analysis of that historic element which has exercised such important creative functions in the constitution of every body politic, will ever manifest that each part of it which has been permanent or powerful has been the natural outgrowth of progressive events. Never yet has a State started into being in a panoply of institutions and fully matured, like the fabled Pallas. Never yet has there been a Lycurgus—such at least as the Myth depicts. Never yet, save by divine authority and in a Theocracy, has a complete and lasting code been imposed from without on any Society. There may be indeed *necessary* elements, or elements inherent by a divine right, in the framework of every corporation; however they may seem to have been the spontaneous adoptions of its free developement. Such I believe to be the case, both in Civil and Ec-

clesiastical Society. But this affects not in any wise our position; which is, that no enduring portion of any social constitution can have been interpolated by the interested contrivance of any one class of men.

Let us however leave abstract speculation, and inquire somewhat more particularly into the manner of the developement of ancient Episcopacy. Its rise has indeed been already discussed; and so much has been said of its progress, that it might appear unnecessary to enlarge on its history. I conceive, however, that something approaching to repetition may be excused in a subject of which the interest is so great, and which it is not very easy to treat by a strict process of exhaustive analysis. I shall address myself only to those points which appear to have been misrepresented or misapprehended; and I shall discuss them with a brevity which may perhaps wear the semblance of feebleness.

I contend then, that, assuming the Divine origin of an Episcopacy of some kind, the Episcopal functions and prerogatives of the early Church were evolved and defined by a

natural and necessary action and reaction in the free progress of events.

We have already seen how Order unfolded itself from the bosom of the infant Church; and how, in her consciousness, the Episcopate was the key in the arch of strength which that Order gave her. Repetition of the arguments is not required. It is enough to have indicated that, in their combination, they establish the conclusion summarily expressed above. It will scarcely be maintained that the foundations, at least, of Episcopal rule were laid in any temper of priestly domination. Let us consider, by a discussion of a few disconnected but significant symptoms, what was the method observed in the erection of the superstructure.

Now the formation of every grand social institution would appear to be conducted by means of the influence of external events, and the modifications of internal development acting upon, or giving form to, the permanent and necessary element which belongs to the institution itself. These external influences and internal needs will, in a great

degree, generate and determine each other, and appear in the shape of action and reaction.

The germ of Episcopacy, which may be regarded as the essential element in early Church government, and the manner in which it entered into its Constitution, have been already considered. We have also alluded, though very cursorily, to the agency of external circumstances on the unfolding of the Episcopal system. For it has been shewn that this system was the focus of Church Union at a period when Church History was little more than perpetual persecution; and that the representatives of this system were the first objects in attack. The indirect effect of such circumstances would necessarily be to give greater prominence and distinctness to the Episcopate. If Bishops were the especial objects of attack because they were the great props of union, it was necessary that they should assume more vigor and importance when union was threatened by persecution. The combat which imperilled the champion was exactly that which made the champion necessary.

We have also seen in some degree how the Bishop in the early Church supplied its various needs and the novel requirements of its internal œconomy. The expansive machinery (for example) of ancient Christianity was not exercised in a disconnected aggregate of discursive and desultory Missionary efforts. It was put in action as a centralised system of operations, emanating from a centre of vital energy in the Bishop of some neighbouring Church. Such was the *Action* of the elder Church. But if organization was thus, generally and humanly speaking, the condition of propagating the Faith, what must have been its value when the diffusion of Gospel light had thus multiplied the numbers of the faithful? Its enhanced importance, and the strength which accrued to Church system from every accession of converts, is an instance of the *Reaction* of which we speak.

The principle might be exemplified in every circumstance of early Church history. It is unnecessary to go through them in detail. Let us consider for a moment the more strictly spontaneous and internal action of the Church in the unfolding of her own system,

and we shall see that the constitution which we investigate was far indeed from being imposed on a reluctant and helpless body.

There is a passage in Tertullian¹ in which a particular line of argument leads him to say in very explicit terms, that the distinction of the hierarchy and the laity was established by the Church's own unfettered action. "It is the authority of the Church, and its honor as consecrated in the council of the clerical order, which has constituted the distinction between that order and the laity." From these words taken apart from their context it has been inferred that Tertullian thought slightly of the initial distinction of clergy and people. The late learned Bishop of Lincoln has² shewn that the inference, when the whole argument is considered, must be of a directly opposite kind. And indeed the words of Tertullian speak more for his high opinion of Church authority and independence than for a low estimate of clerical rank.

¹ "Differentiam inter Ordinem et plebem constituit Ecclesiæ auctoritas et honor per Ordinis consessum sanctificatus."—De Exhort. Cast. 7.

² On Tertullian, p. 213.

If there be here any departure from the ordinary formulas of the orthodox, it would seem to verge toward undue exaltation of the powers of the whole, rather than confusion of the functions of its parts¹. But this inference we may safely draw from the passage: that, in Tertullian's apprehension at all events, the prerogatives of the clergy in general, including of course the special functions of the Episcopate, had been gradually and legitimately ascertained by the free consent of the whole ecclesiastical corporation.

To any one versed in the history of the

¹ It can be hardly necessary to prove Tertullian's belief in the divine original of the Order. We may, however, quote from his tract *De Præscr.* 37: "We walk in that rule which the Church has handed down from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, Christ from God." "*In eâ regulâ incedimus quam Ecclesia ab Apostolis, Apostoli a Christo, Christus a Deo tradidit.*" In ch. 41, he makes it a charge against the heretics that they confused the orders: "And so one is bishop to day, to morrow another; he is deacon to day who is reader to morrow; priest to day, and to morrow a layman." "*Itaque alius hodie episcopus, cras alius: hodie diaconus, qui cras lector; hodie presbyter qui cras laicus.*" Also, *De Fugâ*, 13: "This form the Apostles impressed on the Episcopate with wise foresight." "*Hanc Episcopatui formam Apostoli providentius condiderunt.*"

early centuries, when he that desired the office of a Bishop desired not only a good but an arduous work—when persecution was the ordinary homage of the world, and poverty the customary reward of toil—when without were fightings, and fears within—to any who bears these things in mind, it cannot but appear strange that self-aggrandisement should ever have been imputed to early Church Officers. There have been ever among the opponents of episcopal control frequent admissions that the system took its rise and growth in no unnatural or selfish process. To quote a few of these candid concessions may render a more close investigation superfluous.

Calvin¹ says, “It can be a matter of no surprise, that the twelve Apostles should have had one among them to preside over the rest. This is in accordance with nature; this is re-

¹ “Quod duodecim Apostoli unum habuerint inter se qui omnes regeret, nihil mirum. Hoc enim fert natura: hoc hominum ingenium postulat, ut in quovis cœtu, etiamsi æquales sint omnes potestate, unus tamen sit veluti moderator in quem alii respiciant. Nulla est curia sine consule; nullus consessus judicum sine prætore seu quæstore; Collegium nullum sine præfecto; nulla sine magistro societas.”—Instit. iv. vi. 8.

quired by the very temperament of mankind, that there be in every assembly, although all be equal in power, some one to act as moderator, and to command the respect of all. There can be no Curia without its Consul; no bench of judges without its Prætor or Quæstor; no College without its Master; no Society without its President." Beza¹: "That was indeed essential which by the perpetual ordinance of God both was and is and ever shall be necessary: I mean that among the Presbytery there be some one foremost both in rank and dignity, who may preside over the direction of every action, with that right which is accorded him by divine institution." And a celebrated Presbyterian champion²: "While in that golden Apostolic age all was conducted by the common counsel of the Presbytery; yet, for the sake of order, there

¹ "Essentiale fuit quod ex Dei ordinatione perpetuâ necesse fuit est et erit, ut in Presbyterio quispiam et loco et dignitate primus actioni gubernandæ præsit, cum eo quod ipsi divinitus attributum est jure."—Contr. Sarav. apud Sarav. Divers. Tract. p. 244. [Ed. Lond. 1611.]

² "Cum omnia communi Presbyterorum concilio gerantur aureo illo Apostolorum sæculo, ordinis tamen causa aliquis semper præfuit."—Didoclavius [i.e. David Calderwood] Alt. Damas. 301.

was always some one to preside." And thus speaks the Helvetian¹ Confession: "Meanwhile, for the preservation of order, some one defined personage convoked the assembly of the ministry; brought forward matters of deliberation in it; collected the opinions of the rest; and took every precaution against possible confusion." "Ordinis causa,"... "ne qua oriretur confusio." What can be a more perspicuous acknowledgment that it was the natural needs and the free play of Church communities which brought out Church government in its plenitude? But not only was her government of divine original [Beza, ut supra], and freely and fairly developed for human needs and by human communities;—but that government was not that of a Presbyterian President; it was the Episcopal. Hear Blondel, who accounts it ridiculous to draw any distinction between presidency and authority; between priority and governing

¹ "Interea propter ordinem servandum unus aut certus aliquis ministrorum cœtum convocavit, et in cœtu res consultandas proposuit, sententias item aliorum collegit, denique ne qua oriretur confusio, pro virili cavit."—Confess. Helvet. 18.

power. Hear even Salmasius¹, who concedes, "They are quite aware that the distinction of these two orders in the Church, viz. of Bishops and Presbyters, is of the very highest antiquity; the Apostolic times alone excepted."

And that eminent Presbyterian divine, George Hill, declares, "It will be admitted by every person acquainted with Ecclesiastical History that the form of government which is called Episcopal has from very early times prevailed in the Christian Church. For although Bishops and Priests appear to have been confounded in Scripture and in the writings of the Apostolical Fathers, yet in the second century, the name of Bishop was appropriated to an order of men who possessed exclusively the right of ordination and jurisdiction, and who were the overseers of those whom they ordained."

"Amidst circumstances so embarrassing, amidst conflicts so severe from within and

¹ "Sciunt rem esse antiquissimam ut hi duo ordines in Ecclesiâ fuerint distincti, Episcoporum et Presbyterorum, si excipiantur Apostolica tempora."—Walo Messalinus, p. 7.

from without, (I quote Neander¹) the influence of individuals distinguished for piety, firmness, and activity, would be particularly felt, and the general danger would increase its authority. Thus the paramount authority of the individuals who, as moderators over the college of presbyters, were denominated Bishops, might perhaps have grown up insensibly out of the circumstances of the times in which the Christian communities were multiplied. This may have been the case even in the absence of any *intentional* design of remodelling the earlier constitution of the Church. It may be that, as the labors of S. John in Asia Minor had a great influence on the subsequent developement of the Church, so also they may have had great weight in this matter especially, since the circumstances of the times induced him to entrust to certain individual presbyters the chief care of maintaining pure doctrine amidst the prevailing corruptions, of warding off those threatening dangers, and of keeping an oversight over the whole Church. The novel and violent conflicts, internal as well as external, which in

¹ Vol. I. 265.

this and the following [third] century the Church had to encounter, might also contribute anew to foster the monarchical element in the constitution of the Church."

This is a most important passage, especially as proceeding from a writer who elsewhere very freely imputes "intentional design of remodelling the earlier constitution of the Church" to her rulers; but who here confesses, albeit in hypothetical terms, the very principle for which I contend. 'Mutentur mutanda;' and the above words well describe the successive evolution not of a "remodelled Constitution," but of those elements of Church order which were in it from the beginning.

We have dwelt already at too great length on the general and abstract view of ancient Episcopacy. It is not very easy to exhibit a clear synoptic view of the birth and growth of an Institution coeval with the Church and therefore developed principally in its non-historic age¹. Let us now endeavour to supply

¹ Let it be remembered that Eusebius was the first to compose any connected History of Ecclesiastical affairs; that he was but insufficiently informed on many topics; and that the period we discuss was wholly anterior to his æra.

the defects and obscurity of what has preceded by a close inspection of the actual form and working of primitive Episcopacy. Let us leave awhile all speculation on its Idea, and its genesis, to contemplate it in its realised Form.

END OF PART I.

the details and character of what has been
 called for a long time the actual form
 and working of political economy. The
 we have really an exposition on its form
 and its history to comprehend it in its true
 and proper sense.

on the subject of the history of political
 economy, and its relation to the history of
 the human mind, and its relation to the
 history of the human race, and its relation
 to the history of the human world.

PART II.

THE CHARACTER AND FORM OF POLITICAL
 ECONOMY, AND ITS RELATION TO THE
 HISTORY OF THE HUMAN MIND, AND ITS
 RELATION TO THE HISTORY OF THE HUMAN
 RACE, AND ITS RELATION TO THE HISTORY
 OF THE HUMAN WORLD.

BOOK I.

THE HISTORY OF THE HUMAN MIND, AND
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 WORLD.

PART II.

THE CHARACTER AND POSITION OF PRIMITIVE
BISHOPS.

PART II.

CHAPTER IV.

The Primitive Bishop in his Individual Character.

SECTION I.

THE method of appointment and election of Bishops did not very early receive any definite and universal form. We may infer from what is recounted of the appointment of the first Deacons that the Apostles were in the habit of permitting the choice of their ministers to be conducted by the faithful whenever they could trust the spirit and discretion of the newly-formed communities. It would appear to have been the usual course to entrust the offices of a newly-planted Church to the first converts, provided they were in other respects fitted to discharge¹

¹ "Preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first fruits of their conversions to be Bishops

them. The general rule in subsequent elections was for the Presbyters themselves to propose some person who was qualified to succeed to a vacancy, and to leave it to the whole body to ratify or annul their selection¹. This practice is frequently alluded to in S. Cyprian's letters².

One of the most interesting elections of the kind was that of a successor to S. James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem. There is an ancient story, the preservation of which we owe to Eusebius³, that whatever Apostles and Disciples of our Lord yet survived, met together and Ministers over such as should afterwards believe, having first tried them by the Spirit." Κατὰ χώραν καὶ πόλεις κηρύσσοντες καθέστανον τὰς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτῶν, δοκιμάσαντες τῷ πνεύματι εἰς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους μελλόντων πιστεύειν.—Clemens Rom. 42.

¹ "Appointed by the Apostles, or afterward chosen by other excellent men, with the consent of the whole Church." Τοὺς κατασταθέντας ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀποστόλων ἢ μετὰξυ ὑφ' ἐτέρων ἐλλογίμων ἀνδρῶν, συνευδοκησάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσης.—Clem. Rom. 44.

² e.g. Ep. LIX. p. 129; Ep. LXVII. p. 172. "Sacerdos plebe præsente sub omnium oculis deligatur, et dignus atque idoneus publico iudicio ac testimonio comprobetur, ut plebe præsente vel detegantur malorum crimina, vel bonorum merita prædicentur." See also Origen. Hom. VI. in Levit. [Op. II. p. 216. Ed. Bened.]

³ Eusebius, H. E. III. 11.

ther with His kinsmen ; and that their choice fell upon Simeon the son of Cleopas. Their regard would naturally tend towards one of our Lord's relatives according to the flesh ; and they judged Simeon the most worthy candidate.

But this was a method of procedure that could plainly not endure beyond a single generation. The mode of election in subsequent times was generally of the nature we have already seen. And when Churches became less isolated, when there were other Bishops within reach, it became the universal practice for the Bishops of the neighbouring Churches to meet together where the vacancy had occurred. The local clergy nominated a successor in their presence ; and he was accepted by the suffrages of the whole people unless grave objections were laid against him¹ ; and in that case he was rejected.

¹ “ Factus est autem Cornelius episcopus de Dei et Christi Ejus judicio ; de clericorum pæne omnium testimonio ; de plebis quæ tunc affuit suffragio ; et de sacerdotum antiquorum et bonorum virorum collegio.”—S. Cyprian. Ep. LV. p. 104.

Again, “ Cornelio in catholica ecclesia de Dei judicio et cleri ac plebis suffragio ordinato.”—Ep. LXVIII. p. 177.

In process of time ecclesiastical system assumed a more determinate and symmetrical shape. Christendom became (as Barrow says) one continued body. The same system was carried out. Instead of the Bishops of an ill-determined *neighbourhood*, it was henceforward by his Colleagues of the *Province* that the successor of any prelate had his election supervised and attested¹.

But it was not every man who might thus be nominated and elected. It does not appear certain that the rule laid down in the canons, that he should be thirty years of age, had obtained from the very earliest times.

And "Episcopo semel facto, et collegarum ac plebis testimonio et judicio comprobato."—Ep. XLIV. p. 86.

¹ "It is fitting that the Bishop should be constituted, if possible, by all his coprovincial Bishops." Ἐπίσκοπον προσήκει μάλιστα μὲν ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν ἐν τῇ ἐπαρχίᾳ καθίστασθαι, κ.τ.λ.—Conc. Nic. Can. 4.

"For the due celebration of Ordinations, all the neighbouring Bishops of the same province are to repair to the people over whom a Bishop is to be ordained; then let the Bishop be chosen in the presence of the people who have had the fullest knowledge of the life of each." "Ad eam plebem, cui præpositus ordinatur, episcopi ejusdem provinciæ proximi quique convenient, et episcopus deligatur plebe præsentē, quæ singulorum vitam plenissime novit."—Cypr. Ep. LXVII. p. 172.

Indeed Timothy was certainly ordained¹ young; and it appears tolerably certain that Athanasius was Bishop of Alexandria before he was thirty. Ignatius calls the ordination of Damas νεωτερικὴν τάξιν “a youthful appointment.” Yet it was certainly *customary*, at all events, that no man should be raised to the Episcopal rank under the age at which our Lord began His ministry.

But it was generally insisted upon that the new Candidate should be one of the members of that Church over which he was to preside. This was a qualification implied in the words last quoted from S. Cyprian. “The Bishop was to be chosen in the presence of the people who had perfect knowledge of every man’s life and actions by his conversation among them.” We learn from S. Jerome that this custom ever prevailed at Alexandria, from the time of their first Bishop S. Mark to Dionysius and Heraclas.

Moreover, a legitimate candidate for the Episcopate must have been approved in some at least of the inferior orders of the Church. It was in rare and extraordinary cases only

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 12.

that a Bishop was raised from a private capacity *per saltum*. The instance of S. Ambrose's elevation to the see of Milan is a remarkable exception to this ancient rule.

Such were the preliminary qualifications, without which it was irregular for any man to be put in nomination. But mere election, however regular, was insufficient to constitute a man a Bishop. Though a presbyter already, he needed a further and a special consecration and ordination. Cornelius had passed through *all* the inferior¹ orders, and yet he had ordination by sixteen Bishops when he was promoted to the see of Rome. As it was necessary to valid election that the Bishop designate should have been chosen by the lay people's suffrages in the presence of the Bishops of the province, so it was requisite, before he could lay claim to Episcopal functions, that he should be ordained before the eyes of the people by these same Prelates—all of them when they could be collected together, or by three (with

¹ "Non iste ad episcopatum subito pervenit, sed per omnia ecclesiastica officia promotus . . . ad sacerdotii sublimis fastigium cunctis religionis gradibus ascendit."—Cyprian. Ep. LV. p. 103.

the consent of the rest) when it was not possible to convene the full complement of the hierarchy¹.

Here then we have two parties, the plenary consent of each of whom was necessary to the instalment of a new Bishop into his See—the faithful laity, and the co-provincial Bishops. I cannot forbear to notice here, although the remark properly belongs to a later portion of this treatise, that we hear nothing of any further ecclesiastical sanction whatever being required. No foreign prelate as yet appears as claiming to confirm and sanction the appointment. Later indeed a Veto of a far different kind was interposed. When State assistance and State influence were introduced into the organization of the Church, the Emperor established his claim to give license for election,

¹ Ἐπίσκοπον προσήκει μάλιστα μὲν ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν ἐν τῇ ἐπαρχίᾳ καθίστασθαι. εἰ δὲ δύσχερες εἴη τὸ τοιοῦτο, διὰ μῆκος ὁδοῦ, ἐξ ἅπαντος τρεῖς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συναγομένους, συμπλήφων γινομένων καὶ τῶν ἀπόντων, καὶ συντιθεμένων διὰ γραμμάτων, τότε τὴν χειροτονίαν ποιέεισθαι.—Concil. Nicæn. c. 4. (Labbe, II. p. 29.) The Apostolical Canons indeed allow ordination by *two* Bishops: but this was contrary to earlier usage. It should be observed, however, that ordination by a single Bishop, although irregular and uncanonical, was valid. See Bingham, Book II. xi. 6.

to interpose a Veto on its result, and even to reserve to himself the selection of one out of a nominated¹ list. But in the first three centuries, the only parties to the election of a new Bishop were his own Church, and the Chief Pastors of the surrounding Churches².

One formality remained to be observed before he entered on his new honors and his new duties. He was now acknowledged by his own province. He was moreover a Bishop of the Church Catholic, in virtue of his ordination. But he had not been recognised as such. Now that he had been canonically promoted, it was his first care to send his communicatory letters to foreign Bishops, that his brethren might be assured of his faith and orthodoxy, and certified of his due election and confirmation. These letters were called *Litteræ*³ *Enthronisticæ*. Even the heretic Novatian,

¹ Euseb. Vit. Constant. III. 59, 60. Sozom. VII. 8.

² That Episcopal ordination was indispensably necessary to any pretender to Episcopal functions is admirably evinced by the fact that even schismatics were compelled to avail themselves of it. Novatian resorted to violence, and having seized three Bishops, μετὰ βίας ἡνάγκασεν εἰκο-
νικῇ τινι καὶ ματαίᾳ χειρεπιθεσίᾳ ἐπισκοπὴν αὐτῷ δοῦναι.—
Euseb. VI. 35.

³ Or κοινωνικὰ γράμματα: not to be confounded with

though illegally and schismatically ordained, found it expedient to send out his communicatory letters; and to include S. Cyprian among the Prelates to whom they were addressed.

It would seem superfluous to remark that the primitive rule was that there should be but one Bishop in each Church, were it not for the curious question attending one of its exceptions, if exception it be. It would be tedious to quote positive testimony to the general enforcement of the rule. For negative proof, we may appeal again to the history of the heretic Novatian, who was generally condemned throughout the Catholic Church for procuring himself to be ordained Bishop, even in a Church so large as to contain 46 presbyters, and above a hundred of the inferior orders: and to consist of 50,000 Communicants on what is by no means the highest computation¹. To this evidence, direct and indirect,

the communicatory letters which Bishops gave to persons travelling into foreign parts; as is noted by Valesius, (1695, p. 140.)

¹ This is that of Bp. Burnet.

the words of Origen¹, "In each Church are two Bishops," offer a sufficiently curious apparent contradiction. That it is apparent only is manifest from the very next words, "the one visible, the other invisible."

But there were real exceptions. In order to heal an inveterate contest, it was occasionally permitted to infringe the rule. And where the legal Bishop was infirm, his functions were discharged, not by hired servants, but by a coadjutor, who was to succeed him at his death².

A very remarkable theory, supported by many learned³ men, finds another exception in this hypothesis, that in very early times, before the Jewish and Gentile elements were fused into one perfect unity, these sections

¹ "Per singulas Ecclesias bini sunt Episcopi; alius visibilis, alius invisibilis."—Hom. XIII. in Luc.

² Thus Narcissus, Bishop of Jerusalem, when he was 120 years old, and inadequate to his post, had Alexander for his coadjutor, both Eusebius and S. Jerome hinting his choice was determined by revelation. There are frequent instances of later date.

³ Hammond: approved by Pearson, who, however, subsequently changed his opinion. Bingham leaves the question undecided.

had in many cities each their several head. Euodius and Ignatius are supposed to have been contemporaneous, and for this cause, at Antioch—Linus and Clemens at Rome.

We will now proceed to consider the functions and authority of the individual President of each Church.

SECTION II.

IN this Chapter we have to consider the position and character of the early Bishop, considered simply in his capacity of local administrator of his Church. The question seems to suggest itself at the outset, If the Bishops of primitive antiquity were considered to be successors of the Apostles, how is it that they were *local* officers at all? Were not the Apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature? And was local residence consistent with such a charge?

We may reply, that this injunction was given to a body of men, and in them to the whole Church; but not to each individual; inasmuch as it is evidently impossible for any individual to undertake a world-wide mission. Moreover, if we look to the spirit of this command, which was calculated to inspire the Church with Missionary zeal rather than to prescribe any precise method of diffusing the Faith, we shall see that the Bishops of the Ancient Church proved themselves worthy in-

heritors of such a charge. For they were, each of them at his several post, the most energetic centres of light from which Gospel Truth should radiate around, the most true heralds to all nations that we could desire.

Nor was itinerant preaching a necessary condition, even of Apostolic labor. S. James would seem to have been a permanent resident at Jerusalem. At least he was always found and consulted there, when S. Paul visited that capital.

But while it was not inconsistent with Apostolic example that the Presidents of the Churches should be resident officers, it must not be imagined, as it has been sometimes supposed, that the authority of the Bishop was limited to single Congregations. This would very often be the case—as the Gospel was ordinarily introduced into a large city in the first instance—and the Church in it consequently held for awhile an isolated position—surrounded as it was on all sides by the *pagani*, whose topographical appellation has passed into a synonyme with heathen ignorance. But it was not in virtue of any rule of discipline, that the chief Pastor had only one

city congregation in his keeping. It was a consequence of his being the light of a candle shining in dark places—and it was so far from an essential attribute, that the Missionary spirit (which we have just had occasion to allude to as inherent in his office) was ever on the alert to win its way into the contiguous strongholds of error and bring them into his Communion, and to the Faith of the Lord and Master Whose commission he bore.

No, the Bishop of Antiquity cannot be identified with a Congregationalist President. A President, indeed, he was with very full powers¹. But his precedence was not simply local—nor that of a *primus inter pares*. It was that of *an Order*; and it was *Catholic*. And on this account we find that Bishops, even of another Church, were treated with more filial reverence than Priests or Deacons

¹ “Cum habeat in ecclesiæ administratione voluntatis suæ arbitrium liberum unusquisque *Præpositus*,” &c.—Cyprian.

“*Præsent* probati quique seniores,” &c.—Tertull. Apol. 39.

“Ἐπειτα προσφέρεται τῷ προεστῶτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἄρτος κ.τ.λ.—Justin M. Apol. i.

Προσετάττετο τοὺς μὲν ἐκκλησίῳν προέδρους πάντας δεσμοῖς παραδίδοσθαι.—Euseb. viii. 2.

could ever receive. The Christians of Lyons write to Eleutherus as "Father."—Irenæus they address in the more familiar language¹ "Brother, Companion, Colleague."—So far was Episcopal Rank from consisting in mere local distinction.

We need not dwell long on the proofs which vindicate distinct powers, distinct functions, distinct order to the Bishop. By way of indicating what force the arguments and difficulties alleged against this principle carry, we may cursorily advert to what is at first sight one of the most cogent that have been produced.

S. Jerome² thus speaks of the practice of the Church at Alexandria: "For at Alexandria also, from Mark the Evangelist down to Heraclas and Dionysius, Bishops, the Presbytery were wont to choose one always of their own number, and on his being inducted to a higher rank to call him *Episcopus*." This

¹ It appears from the testimony of Eusebius and Jerome that Irenæus was a presbyter at the time.

² "Nam et Alexandriæ a Marco Evangelistâ usque ad Heraclam et Dionysium episcopos, presbyteri semper unum ex se electum, in excelsiore gradu collocatum, episcopum nominabant."—Epist. ad Evang. ci. 1.

passage has been very eagerly quoted as bearing evidence that in one of the great Apostolic Churches of Antiquity the Bishop was only the presiding presbyter, and that his election by his colleagues was all the ordination he required. But Hooker has fully shewn that these words are meant to indicate that at Alexandria the college of presbyters had the privilege of electing their Bishop from among *themselves* exclusively, and were not liable to receive their chief pastor from an inferior order (the successor of Ignatius for instance had been a deacon) nor from a foreign Church. Any such occurrence in any Church was an exception to a general rule prevailing throughout Catholic Christendom. But at Alexandria the rule was explicitly asserted which elsewhere usually obtained by tacit¹ understanding.

I have said that to the Bishop belonged functions distinct in kind from any which the inferior orders of the Clergy could exercise.

¹ If indeed the context be attended to, there is no danger of the scope of S. Jerome's words being mistaken. He is urging humility on the Deacons of Rome: and his object is to teach them not to arrogate to themselves parity with the presbyters.

There were offices which could be performed by none but the Bishop. The reconciling of penitents, the dedication of holy places, and confirmation, were offices or rites never entrusted to the presbyter except in cases of extreme necessity, and then by special commission. Ordination was never under any circumstances committed to any but Bishops.

And in ordinary ministerial functions the Clergy acted by¹ delegation, and in dependence and subordination to their superior: but the Overseer himself held his Commission direct from Heaven, and exercised his Episcopal functions by an independent authority. We may notice the exemplification of this principle in the essential offices of the Christian Minister; the administration of the Sacraments and the preaching of the Gospel. "It is not lawful," says Ignatius², "either to

¹ "Let no man do any thing pertaining to the Church without the Bishop." Μηδείς χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπισκόπου τι πρᾶσσει τῶν ἀνηκόντων εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.—Ign. ad Smyrn. VIII.

"The Priests must do nothing without the opinion of the Bishop." Τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους μηδὲν πράττειν ἄνευ τῆς γνώμης τοῦ ἐπισκόπου.—Concil. Laod. c. 57.

² Οὐκ ἐξόν ἐστι χωρὶς τοῦ Ἐπισκόπου οὔτε βαπτίζειν,

baptize or to celebrate the Eucharist without the Bishop: but that which he allows is well-pleasing to God." "The right of giving Holy Baptism," says Tertullian¹, "rests with the Chief Priest, *i. e.* the Bishop. Thence the Priests and Deacons receive it: but never without the Bishop's authority, for the maintaining the Church's honor." "Although the presbyters perform such functions, the source of their ministerial authority is with the Chief Priest²."

Nor was it otherwise with the offices of teaching and preaching. The intimate and visible manner in which the right of administering holy rites was made to hang upon the Bishop becomes more intelligible when we

οὔτε ἀγάπην ποιεῖν, ἀλλ' ὁ ἂν ἐκεῖνος δοκιμάσῃ τοῦτο καὶ τῷ Θεῷ εὐάρεστον.—Ign. ad Smyrn. VIII.

¹ "Dandi jus quidem habet summus sacerdos, qui est episcopus; de hinc presbyteri et diaconi: non tamen sine episcopi auctoritate, propter ecclesiæ honorem."—Tertull. de Bapt. 17.

"Inde venit (says S. Jerome) ut sine jussione Episcopi, neque presbyter neque diaconus jus habeat baptizandi."—Dialog. contra Lucifer.

Of the other Sacrament, ἐκείνη βεβαία εὐχαριστία ἡγείσθω ἢ ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἐπισκόπου οὐσα, ἢ ᾧ ἂν αὐτὸς ἐπιτρέψῃ.—Ign. ad Smyrn. VIII.

² Ambros. de Sacram.

recollect that owing to the circumstances of the primitive Church a single congregation might very often constitute an entire diocese. In such case the dependence of all on their head would be more conspicuous than it can be in such unwieldy dioceses as have since fallen to the care of single Bishops¹.

But to be instant in *preaching* was indeed an essential feature of the primitive successor of the Apostles. In comparison with preaching, they were sent neither to baptize nor to rule. Authority to dispense the Sacraments they possessed and transmitted in virtue of their office: but capacity for confuting error, warning the sinful, encouraging their flock to Confessorship or to Martyrdom, and persuading men to the Truth—this was a direct gift from God without the mediation of human instruments. Accordingly, preaching was an office constantly discharged by the Bishop himself, more especially in the African Church².

¹ We may judge of the size of ancient Dioceses from such statistics as these. Asia Minor was about 630 miles in length and 210 in breadth. It contained 400 Bishops. Palestine (160 miles by 120) had at least 48. Even Ireland had once between 50 and 60 sees.

² This is the reason, as Bingham observes, why we so

And it was by authority from him (*potestate acceptâ*) that presbyters were heard in the pulpit. So active were the Bishops in the discharge of this especial function of an Angel of good tidings, that it was rare even in the time of S. Augustine for presbyters to preach in the presence of the Bishop¹. In the language of our Homilies, "they² were then preaching Bishops and more seen in pulpits than in princes' palaces; more often occupied in His legacy, who said, 'Go ye into the whole world and preach,' than in embassages and affairs of princes of this world."

In the detail of Ecclesiastical Œconomy the Bishop enjoyed plenary authority. "The regulations of the internal œconomy of each particular Church," says³ the learned Bishop Kaye, "was certainly vested in the hands of

constantly meet the phrase *tractante Episcopo* in the writings of S. Cyprian.

¹ Owing to the disturbances originating in the heresy of Arius presbyters were not suffered to preach at all at Alexandria, and the office devolved entirely on the Bishop.

² Homily against Peril of Idolatry.

³ Account of Writings of Tertullian, p. 221. See Tertull. de Virginibus Velandis, 9. De Jejuniis, 13. Episcopi universæ plebi mandare jejunia assolent.

the Bishop. He appointed, for instance, days of fasting, whenever the circumstances of the Church appeared to call for such marks of humiliation."

The revenues of the Church were completely under his control. The Apostolical¹ Constitutions and Canons² are explicit on this head. All who received support from the incomes and oblations of the Church had it *episcopo dispensante*³. And Dionysius of Corinth tells⁴ us Soter had not only observed but improved on the custom of his predecessors in levying contributions on his Church for the benefit of other and more distressed communities.

It is allowed, even by Spanheim himself, that a Bishop of the Cyprianic age had the sole power of convening his Presbyters and Deacons in Synod, and of collecting their suffrages about Church matters.

Privileges to exempt men from the jurisdiction of their diocesan were utterly un-

¹ Constitut. Apost. II. xxv.

² Can. Apost. xxxvii.

³ Cyprian. Ep. xli. p. 80.

⁴ Cited by Euseb. iv. 23.

known to former ages. Cyprian defines¹ the Church Visible to be “a people united to its Bishop, a flock adhering to its Pastor. Whence the Church may be said to be in the Bishop, and the Bishop in the Church; and if any are not with their Bishop, they are not in the Church.” The anomaly of “Peculiars” was not known to Antiquity. No supposed sanctity in monks, hermits, or ascetics, could exempt them from Episcopal² control.

But was this wide and plenary authority which we see to have exhibited itself in so many varied forms, all unlimited? And did the influence of the Bishop in no degree depend on his personal character and qualifications?

Not so. The passing of judgment on the character and conduct of spiritual superiors was indeed as delicate and difficult a question in that age as in any time—the acting on such judgment where it was irresistible, was no less perplexing and hazardous then than now. But in all *extreme* cases the difficulties and apparently inconsistent tendencies of mo-

¹ Ep. LXVI. p. 168.

² Bingham, Book II. iv. 2.

ral obligation present a Gordian knot, which must be severed by the impulsive action of instantaneous and irresistible moral conviction¹. But such a resolution is not one which a Christian will wish to contemplate², nor is it necessary; for it can only arise of necessity in a state of things abnormal, and therefore we may hope exceptional. And in cases where no extreme difficulty arose, where there was no pretence for schism or disobedience, there was still, of course, an ample scope for the expansion or contraction of a Bishop's influence according as the energy and consistency of his life did, or did not, secure respect in the esteem of his Communicants—in Public Opinion I might have said, could I bring myself to use

¹ See Whewell's *Morality* on resistance to Government, the end of the chapter on Cases of Necessity.

² "A people obedient to the Lord's commands must separate itself (says S. Cyprian) from a wicked Bishop, and not mix itself up with the sacrifices of a sacrilegious priest: since with it chiefly rests the power either of choosing worthy or rejecting unworthy priests. And this right we perceive to have descended from divine authority: that the priest should be chosen in the presence of the people and before the eyes of all, and be approved as worthy and fit by the judgment of all."—*Ep. LXVII.* p. 171.

that much abused ὑποκορισμὸς for popular folly, in relation to a matter in which vulgar prejudices are more than usually prejudicial. But so much care was ever exercised in the choice of chief Pastors—so much regard was ever had to consistent and pious conduct—so many real and true checks and vetos were available in case of an improper nomination—that it was rarely indeed that the Bishop was otherwise than the revered ensample of his people. Even in such cases, however, his power was far from arbitrary. The limitations imposed on it from his relations with the rest of the Church Catholic were the most important. These will fall under consideration in the next Chapter. There were, however, constitutional checks from within, as well as from without, his own diocese.

According to the discipline of the Ancient Church, the Bishop scarcely ever acted, even in matters where he only was competent to act, without the advice of his presbytery, who formed his assessors, and a kind of ecclesiastical Senate. In matters, too, of great moment, the assent of the Laity¹ was requested. Thus

¹ It can be scarcely necessary to state that by the

S. Cyprian¹ writes to his lay brethren, "All things shall be examined in your presence, and submitted to your judgment." *Nihil sine consensu plebis gerere* was the rule he laid down with himself. He did indeed himself ordain some presbyters and inferior clergy without the previous consent of his Council and his Laity; but he speaks of this as an extraordinary circumstance; and perhaps it was entirely justified in early habits of thought by the fact that these persons were confessors, to whom ordination was ordinarily conceded without the formalities of previous leave. So general, in other cases, was this recognised limitation on arbitrary or absolute power, that Cornelius² relates that the Bishop who ordained Novatus "being deterred from it by the whole Clergy and by many of the Laity, did entreat that it might be conceded to him to ordain but this one person."

There were similar, or yet more stringent restrictions on another most important function of the chief Ruler of a Church, I mean

Laity, Members of the Church *in full communion* are always to be understood.

¹ Ep. xvii. p. 39.

² Apud Euseb. vi. 43.

the censure of his presbyters. The concurrence¹ of three or more neighbouring Bishops was generally required to render such judgment of force.

Thus we see that if S. Peter² forbade the priesthood *κατακυριεύειν τῶν κλήρων*, the practice of the early Church was in accordance with his injunction. Large, nay plenary powers were of necessity lodged in the hands of the Bishop: yet they were not absolute. S. Chrysostome expressly declares³ the Episcopal power not to be *αὐθεντία* or *ἀρχή*.

Manifold and high were the qualifications needed in a primitive Bishop! He must have been a man of stable faith, of approved life—able to endure hardness. Singular must have been the abilities of a man qualified to rule with firmness—to be modest in the enjoyment of reverence such as Monarchs never knew, because it was given in the heartfelt conviction of a divine right to higher functions than those of terrestrial sway—qualified at the same

¹ Bingham, II. iii.

² 1 Pet. v. 3.

³ S. Chrysost. in I Tim. iii. 1. in Eph. Orat. II. So S. Isidore of Pelusium denies it to be *ἀρχὴ ἀνυπεύθυνος*.

time to arbitrate¹ between those at variance—to plead² for them that were in misery and iron—to correct with all authority, yet to be gentle among his flock, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; with the weak to be weak, to burn in sympathy with the offended; to fight against the world with the heroic fortitude of a Martyr, against the flesh with the suasive eloquence of the Orator, against the Devil with the Cross—to be first in labors, first in love, first in Death, faithful in all—such were the qualities required in a Steward of Christ's Church of old. *Kaì pròs ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός*; Surely their sufficiency was of God!

¹ See Bingham, II. vii. 1. *ἐξουθενημένοι*, 1 Cor. vi. 4, ["least esteemed in the Church," E.V.] may mean, (as Dr Lightfoot observes,) persons of the greatest esteem: the word merely signifying, "arbitrators of men's own choosing, persons in no recognised judicial authority."

² Bingham, II. viii. The qualification of a priest in this respect became almost a condition of his elevation to the Episcopate.

CHAPTER V.

*The mutual relations of the Bishops of the
Ante-Nicene Church.*

“The Apostles were equal, and afterwards the Bishops in all Christendom, until the Pope raised his head above all.”—LUTHER, Articles of Smalcalde, pars II. Art. ix.

WE have been occupied hitherto with the consideration of the ancient idea of Episcopacy, and with its exemplification in individual Bishops. We must now pass to the contemplation of the relationship in which they were all held together. What was the nature of the ties which held in union the Churches of Catholic Antiquity?

Hitherto we have found ecclesiastical system assuming a perfectly symmetrical and intelligible shape. We have observed the monarchical form of government everywhere developed, and regularly developed. Every member of every Church appears linked with every other in the bonds of a visible interde-

pendence and subordination; and the whole is governed and represented by the Bishop.

Now there is a natural and powerful tendency in human thought to generalisation. We are irresistibly led to inquire whether the scheme of government which we have noticed hitherto can be traced yet further. Is there, or is there not, a principle pervading and knitting together the various Churches throughout the world, analogous, or the same with that which we see so absolutely and invariably exemplified in every single Church?

Such a question very obviously suggests itself to the mind of the philosophical student of early Church History. It is hardly needful to add that it is exactly *the* question which is forced on the attention when he proceeds to the sad history of subsequent centuries.

But if it obviously suggests itself, it is to be remembered that its legitimate office in doing so is only to indicate a course of investigation, not to impose any necessary law or theory on the facts which we are to investigate. It is unnecessary in the present age to insist on this the only true method of procedure. A generalisation of a higher order

suggests itself. We neither seize on it as certain, nor reject it as worthless; but simply ask, "Is it evidenced by the facts?"

Were we to proceed otherwise: were we to start with a theory to which we resolve to reduce the facts of history, we should be liable, nay, we may say well nigh certain, to err. If, for example, we adopt the atomic theory, as we may call it, of ecclesiastical order: that, I mean, which sees not merely a *type* of the Church Catholic in the particular community, not merely a *type* of the particular Church in the Christian Family, or the Christian Union of two or three in their Lord's Name; but the *same thing* on a miniature scale; then I conceive that such a generalisation as we above noticed, becomes a necessary law of thought, instead of that which it really is, a grievous mistake.

But we start with no such assumption: one which, we may remark by the way, is disproved by the falsity of the conclusions it would lead us to, as well as by analytical considerations. We bear in mind that we have as yet been only concerned with the œconomy of particular Churches; and we are not to

assume that their internal œconomy is reproduced in their mutual relationship with each other as branches of the Ante-Nicene Communion.

What, then, was the position of each Bishop in relation to the general Church?

We will first take notice of such of his prerogatives and functions as seem really to have had for a field an extent, of which the limits were not less circumscribed than those of the Church. What limitations were imposed on such power will be more properly considered afterwards. Now it appears, that the only instance in which a Bishop felt himself entitled and obliged to step beyond the sphere of his own Church and to interfere with the conduct of another, was when any part of the Catholic Faith was in danger. And then he was indeed to regard himself as unfettered by the limits of territory, as compelled to speak and to do in defence of the most precious heirloom of God's Church, God's revealed Truth. If this were in danger, he was no longer 'a Bishop by restraint¹:' no

¹ Such is the quaint phrase applied by Hooker to Bishops whose jurisdiction extended over a definite terri-

false scruples as to extent of jurisdiction might then withhold him from raising his voice, and using his influence, to withstand the aggression of error. Nor can it be considered that he was herein out of order, even in his capacity of ruler of a single Diocese. For in the welfare of the whole is comprised the welfare of the part. In the common peril of the whole Church, *his* own Church was most intimately concerned. "For therefore, most dear brother," I quote, as so often before, the words of the Archbishop of Carthage, and they are addressed to a Pope of Rome¹, "is the numerous body of Priests joined together in mutual concord and the bond of unity, that if *any one of our order* attempt to make a heresy, and to sever and lay waste the flock of Christ, the rest may fly to the rescue, and like useful and merciful shepherds, collect the Lord's sheep into a flock. ...For though we are many shepherds, yet we feed one flock ; and we ought to collect and cherish all those sheep which Christ sought

tory, instead of being unlimited like the Apostolic authority.

¹ S. Cyprian Ep. LXVIII. (ad Stephanum) p. 178.

with His own blood and passion." "S. Basil's actions," says Tillemont¹, "shew him to us not as a particular Bishop, or a mere Metropolitan, or as Exarch or Patriarch of several Provinces, but as a saint who enjoyed the Episcopate in full possession, without wronging the authority of his brethren: who did not limit his charity to his jurisdiction, but regarding himself as successor of the Apostles, as Bishop of all the Churches, extended his cares everywhere where the name of Jesus Christ extended, and considered all Christians as his own people, since he carried them all in his heart."

Precisely the same witness may be given to S. Cyprian, S. Athanasius, S. Chrysostome, and all great Bishops, not only of Rome and other Apostolic Churches, but of Churches even of inferior note. Indeed of S. Cyprian we have the express testimony of S. Gregory² of Nazianzum, "He becomes a Pastor, and the best and most approved of Pastors; for he presides not only over the Church of Carthage, nor over that of Africa which from him

¹ Tillemont, ix. 170.

² S. Greg. Naz. Or. xviii. 21, [Ed. Paris. 1630.]

and through him is renowned till now, but also over the whole West, I may almost say, the Eastern, and Southern, and Northern Coast." We see then, that this right and duty of Catholic vigilance was not confined to the President of any single Church, but equally appertained to the chief Minister of a Church which put forward no claim to be of Apostolic foundation. Nay, we may go further. We are in a condition to prove that this right of earnest protest against error, and of energetic action too, belonged even to a Bishop of a minor See; and was actually exercised by a Suffragan of Rome itself against his own immediate superiors.

It is scarcely more than a few months since a long lost treatise by an ancient Doctor of the Church, called "A Refutation of all Heresies," has been brought to light. And, not till within a very short time has it been clearly established who that learned Doctor was. But its authorship is no longer dubious. The Essay of Chevalier Bunsen leaves scarcely room for a doubt that it must be ascribed to Hippolytus, Bishop and Martyr of Portus, one of the suburbicarian sees of Rome. The

arguments which fix the work as his have been exhibited in a more succinct and logical form by Dr Wordsworth.

Now the ninth book of this treatise contains most severe and serious strictures on the heresies of two successive Bishops of Rome. Zephyrinus and Callistus had embraced a Sabellian form of heresy, and had permitted or encouraged laxity of ecclesiastical discipline. But they found a vigorous antagonist in their own Suffragan—in S. Hippolytus—a Father ever revered in the Roman no less than in the Catholic Church—a man so far from virulent or litigious, that S. Chrysostome calls him, “The most sweet and amiable Hippolytus¹.” Could we desire clearer proof that each Bishop had in virtue of his episcopal office an inherent right to denounce an heretical compeer? Could we imagine an instance which would at the same time more satisfactorily shew that S. Hippolytus knew of no Pontiff to whom all Churches owed submission? We find no mention of reference or appeal to any confessed superior whatever. And—we must

¹ Ἰππόλυτος γλυκύτατος καὶ εὐνούστατος.

so far anticipate what we shall hereafter have to observe—it is beyond all controversy plain that if any such Supreme Authority existed, it was not *at Rome* that it was to be sought for: for it is Bishops of Rome whom S. Hippolytus stands forth thus sharply to denounce and rebuke. Nor is the whole force of the argument in this particular example exhausted even yet. What we have said is enforced with *à fortiori* cogency, when we remember that S. Hippolytus was the Suffragan—the *immediate* inferior (if *any* were inferiors) of the Roman Pontiff.

This opposition of S. Hippolytus to the erring Bishops of Rome was no transient energy, to pass away with the impulse or the passion of the moment. It was a course in which he persevered for years. He contended against their heresy while they were alive, and when they were no more, he composed a formal exposure of their errors and an account of his own conduct. And he has left to Catholic Christendom¹ the assurance that he un-

¹ These remarks are chiefly borrowed from Dr Wordsworth's admirable little work on S. Hippolytus and the Church of Rome. *Philosophumena*, Lib. i. p. 3.

dertook this melancholy office as part of his duty as a Bishop of Christ's Church.

In this most important relic of ancient Christian literature we find the language of S. Hippolytus concerning his heretical colleagues very vehement, and we learn from it that his conduct was decisive. Yes, his words are vehement and his conduct was energetic to a degree which might surprise a person imperfectly acquainted with the times. They afford us a valuable and a decisive index to that part of the Episcopal office which we are now concerned to illustrate. For to whatever extent we are able to gain an insight into the Church of that early period, we shall more and more discover that the conduct of S. Hippolytus in this respect was by no means singular. Let us consider this point—for it is one of some importance—at more length.

The¹ Apostle and Evangelist S. John was the beloved disciple. The mainspring of his teaching was Love. Yet when he writes concerning heretics, S. John says, "If there come

¹ The following passage is abstracted nearly verbatim from Wordsworth's S. Hippolytus and the Church of Rome, p. 96.

any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." The prevalent opinion of the Church with regard to S. John's sentiments and example respecting heretics, is well indicated by the record of the incident related by S. Irenæus¹ concerning the Apostle. He quitted the bath at Ephesus when he heard that Cerinthus was there, and exclaimed, "Let us make haste to flee the place, lest the house fall on our heads, since it has under its roof Cerinthus, the enemy of truth."

Among the scholars of S. John were S. Ignatius and S. Polycarp. In the Epistles of the one we see love for the Truth, but love of Unity appears to be the Masterbias. In S. Polycarp we behold ardent zeal for the Faith with vehement antagonism to error. "Knowest thou me?" said Marcion, the heretic, to Polycarp, whom he met when Polycarp had come from Smyrna to visit Anicetus Bishop of Rome. "Yes," was the reply, "I know thee well, the first-born of Satan²."

¹ III. 3. p. 204, Grabe. ² Iren. III. 3. Euseb. IV. 13.

S. Irenæus, when a boy, had seen “the blessed Polycarp;” he treasured his sayings in his memory and has recorded them with affectionate veneration. And in imitation of the frankness of Polycarp, and of his sternness of speech when dealing with heretics, he tells Florinus the heretic, that if the holy Polycarp, whom both of them had known in their youth, had heard the strange dogmas which Florinus was broaching, he would have stopped his ears and exclaimed, “Oh merciful God, to what times hast Thou reserved me,” and would have fled from the place with execration.

Such was the school, tracing its succession from S. John, in which S. Hippolytus was trained. I have indulged the more willingly in this digression, because his upright honest zeal for orthodox doctrine has been obscured by a celebrated writer who has published a work with the intention of elucidating the history of his age: and against such misrepresentation of the spirit of the Ancient Church I conceive it right to seize every opportunity of protest. The æra of S. Hippolytus was not the age—and he assuredly was not the man

to depreciate the value of correct belief—or to detract from the estimation of those “forms of sound words” which were then floating on Catholic Tradition, but which (not depending for their authority on anything short of the warranty of Holy Writ) were stereotyped for future ages in the Catholic Creeds.

But let us return to our main argument. We had been investigating the duty, which we see to have attached to early Bishops, of outstepping their own proper province to denounce and oppose error wherever it might appear. We were naturally drawn into the preceding digression by reason of the peculiar significance of S. Hippolytus’ conduct in this respect—the antagonism of a Suffragan to his superior Bishop—and that Bishop the Pope of Rome. We have then the clearest evidence that it was the office of each, but an attribute peculiar to none, to expose and thwart heresy. It was an obligation coextensive with the value of Truth, not a privilege lodged in some single see.

But it may be asked, was there no remedy in case two Bishops, we may suppose of contiguous sees, thus denounced each other

as traitors to their common creed? With whom lay the determination of their quarrel? We can hardly conceive that there was no tribunal of appeal. How were the flocks of Pastors mutually anathematized—since *both* could not be right—to know which was wrong?

Now the method of solving this difficulty does not present itself with great distinctness from the first. It was gradually framed, as the number of the Churches and the multiplication of heresies gave greater prominence to the difficulty. It was ultimately resolved partly by appeal to the Metropolitan Bishop of the Province; an appeal, no doubt, frequently made with common consent, and so practically conclusive: and finally by a Provincial Council. Let it however be distinctly observed with reference to the first tribunal of appeal, that it had of itself no authority whatever. The independence of each Bishop was in no degree violated by the usual, but not necessary, and certainly not final reference to the chief Minister of the chief Church in the Province. His decision claimed the reverence of all, and was in most cases deferred to by those whose tacit or allowed consent had in-

vested it with attributes of authority. But after all, the members of any particular Church were, by every principle of early Church government, bound to obey and to revere their own immediate Bishop in a degree to which their regard for his Metropolitan bore but a questionable analogy, and which without his consent it could never supersede.

To what ultimate criterion, then, of orthodoxy was the matter in dispute to be referred? It was found in the deliberation of the Provincial Synod. And we may remark that in the duty we have previously enunciated, in the obligation of every individual Bishop to maintain the purity of the Faith, even against impugners of co-ordinate rank with himself, we find the isolated germ of the Authority of the Council. No Doctor of the ancient Church held that such authority was infallible, or of weight when compared with the express teaching of Holy Scripture. But when the question lay between Bishop and Bishop, between officers of like powers and coequal functions, and when there was no remedy,—then it was conceived that the collective voice of their coprovincial prelates must carry weight. And in

the ante-Nicene period, when general Councils were unknown, the authority of the provincial Synod was necessarily supreme. "It is needful to know," says Thomassin¹, "that up to the Council of Nicæa, all ecclesiastical affairs had been terminated in the Councils of each Province. The Council of Nicæa, even, only speaks of Provincial Councils, and orders that all things should be settled therein." And De Marca², Archbishop of Paris; "That custom which assigned to the Councils of each several Province the supreme power of ordaining and deposing Bishops was committed to writing, and confirmed by the Fifth Canon of the Nicene Council, &c."

We fail then to discover any recognition of a supreme authority resident in any single See in the primitive Church. In case of heresy displaying itself in any Bishop, it was competent for a foreign Bishop to interfere: but then it was with *any* Bishop that such prerogative resided. And when remonstrance and argument were unavailing, it was only in the collective voice of many such Bishops that

¹ Part I. i. 3.

² De Concord. VII. 1—2.

an authority was found to which the erring prelate must defer. Can anything add to the clearness of this evidence to the equality of all?

Yes, perhaps, it may be enhanced by the consideration that it was in this case of false doctrine *only* that even so much interference on the part of his colleagues was justified. In matters of discipline, each Bishop was strictly supreme in his own Church. He was “a judge¹ in Christ’s stead”—“he held² the scales of Church government,” and as S. Jerome (even later) observed, “Wherever³ there may be a Bishop, whether at Rome, Eugubium, Constantinople, ... he shares the very same merit, the same priesthood: and all are successors of the Apostles.”

The view which everywhere prevailed was that so admirably expressed by S. Cyprian. There was one universal Episcopal office; but

¹ “Judex vice Christi.”—S. Cypr. Ep. LIX. p. 129.

² “Gubernandæ Ecclesiæ libram tenebat.”—Ep. LXVIII. p. 177.

³ “Ubicunque fuerit Episcopus, sive Romæ, sive Eugubii, sive Constantinopoli. . . . ejusdem meriti, ejusdem est et sacerdotii. Cæterum omnes Apostolorum successores sunt.”—S. Hieron. ad Evagrium, Ed. Basil. II. 334.

its functions belonged singly and completely to each independent Bishop. "Episcopatus unus¹ est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur." "The Episcopate is one,—a whole in which each enjoys full possession." Or, as Fleury has it, "Each individual Bishop has an equal share in it as joint tenant."

And S. Cyprian manifested his principle in his conduct. "Every Bishop," he writes to Stephen, Bishop of Rome, respecting a matter of grave difference—the rebaptizing of heretics—"has the free choice of his own will in the administration of the Church, as he will give an account of his acts to the Lord." And this great charter of Christian liberty, thus enunciated in a full Council at Carthage, he fearlessly maintained; nor could the rage of the Bishop of Rome alarm him, or affect the judgment of other portions of the Western Church in that age².

¹ S. Cyprian de Unit., as quoted in Allies' Church of England cleared from Schism, p. 22.

² I give S. Cyprian's sentiments as expressed before the Council of Carthage, and sanctioned by their approval, "Superest ut de hac ipsâ re singuli quid sentiamus proferamus; neminem judicantes aut a jure communio-
nis aliquem, si diversum senserit, amoventes. Neque

“The sum is that in the ritual part of Religion such Bishops were independent and unaccountable; but in the *substantial* part, in matters of *necessary* faith, they were liable to be censured by their brethren¹.”

If, however, there was one point rather than others upon which Prelates of old were jealous of any intermeddling from without, it was in cases of discipline and jurisdiction. It was not unnatural that the heretic, or the evil liver, who had been driven from the Communion of his own Bishop, should endeavour to ingratiate himself with another, and should hope to find a resource and a support in his favor. But this was a practice which could not be tolerated. It was instinctively felt that it was subversive of all order, and alien to the whole spirit of Ecclesiastical organization.

enim quisquam nostrum episcopum se episcoporum constituit, aut tyrannico terrore ad obsequendi necessitatem collegas suos adigit . . . quando habeat omnis episcopus pro licentiâ libertatis et potestatis suæ arbitrium proprium, &c.”

¹ Waterland, III. 599. A full account of the heresy of Dionysius, and the legitimate interference of the Bishop of Rome, together with the occasion of the above words of S. Cyprian, may be found in Athanas. de Sententia Dionys. 252. de Synod. 757—8.

Accordingly it was ever resented with a spirit which seemed to forebode the fearful effects destined in later ages to follow its adoption. S. Cyprian's fifty-ninth letter is addressed to "his brother Cornelius" of Rome, and is conceived in a spirit of vehement indignation that Felicissimus had ventured to appeal from his decision to that Pope. "What reason is there for coming and announcing that a false Bishop has been constituted in defiance of Bishops? For each Pastor having his assigned portion of the flock to rule and govern by himself, and having to give account of his administration to the Lord, it is fitting that they, over whom we preside, should not travel hither and thither...but there conduct their own cause, where they may meet their accusers, and the witnesses of their crime¹." And it was not only when he himself had reason to complain of an infraction of his authority, that he re-

¹ "Quæ autem causa veniendi et pseudoepiscopum contra Episcopos factum nuntiandi? . . . Nam cum singulis pastoribus portio gregis sit ascripta quam regat unusquisque et gubernet, rationem sui actûs Domino redditurus, oportet utique eos quibus præsumus non circumcursare . . . sed agere illic causam suam ubi et accusatores habere et testes sui criminis possint."—Ep. LIX. p. 136.

cognises this principle. He acknowledges it no less when the proposed reference is to himself. To Rogatian, who had lodged with Cyprian and the Synod a complaint of an unruly deacon, he writes that "it was his singular modesty to refer the case to them, when he might, by virtue of his own Episcopal authority, himself have punished the delinquent¹."

An inquiry into the mutual relations of the various Sees of Antiquity can scarcely be regarded as complete, without some investigation of the history and office of Metropolitan Bishops. A slight sketch of the facts we are able to glean from ancient Authorities concerning them will be given in an Appendix. It is excluded from this Chapter, which has already reached too great a length, both because their functions and their relations to each other are less directly the subject of our search than the mutual aspect of the whole Episcopate, and also for the reason that their whole history prior to the Nicene age is uncertain and obscure.

We have seen that the members of the Ancient Episcopate acknowledged no system-

¹ Ep. III. p. 5.

atic subordination or interdependence; that each See was entire in itself, and in its essence was *αὐτοκέφαλος* and *αὐτόνομος*; that if, by way of accidental arrangement of human and voluntary organization, one See was in any sense the dependent of another, such dependence was ordinarily the result of its historic formation, or its geographic position; that it at all events implied no subserviency and deprived it of no rights; no, not even of that single right of interference in the affairs of other Sees which every Church possessed when the vitality of a common faith was endangered by the heresies of another; finally, that it was in this question of purity of faith alone that any Bishop was responsible to his brethren, while in discipline his own authority was final, and from his decision on any matter his Church had at first no definite tribunal of appeal, nor was any appeal, except to a Provincial Council, ever recognised before the conclusion of the period under our notice.

In closing this branch of our inquiry, the question naturally suggests itself, *Why* should the scheme of systematic organization, accord-

ing to which every Church of Antiquity was internally arranged, find no counterpart in the connexion of each with the body Catholic? Each several Church was in every case marshalled in regular subordination according to the grades of Bishop, Priests, Deacons, and Lay-people. Were it not reasonable to expect the analogy carried out in the position which each particular Church should assume in the entire body?

I think, if indeed it be right to indulge such speculations, that there can be but one reply. It was well that this, the last step in the earthly scheme of subordination, should be wanting to the Church—well, in order to teach her that even her beautiful symmetry was not the self-wrought result of a *Theory*, but a gift imposed upon her from without; well, above all, that she might remember that she is not complete on Earth; that her One Head, The Bishop of our Souls, is her heavenly Spouse Who is represented by no Vicar upon earth, because He Himself is ever with her, and she is knit into her final, her only true unity in Him.

CHAPTER VI.

On the Position of the Bishop of Rome in the first three centuries.

“Ante Nicænam Synodum unusquisque sibi vixit, et parvus respectus ad Romanam Ecclesiam habebatur.”—Æneas Sylvius (Pius II.) Ep. 31. ad Martin. Mayer.

OUR main task might now perhaps be considered to be accomplished. We have studied, at some length, and from different points of view the aspect of ante-Nicene Episcopacy. We have contemplated it as mutually developed by, and developing the gigantic and glorious framework of the Ancient Church. We have considered it in its theory, and in its realisation; inquiring into the mode in which it was realised in its individual members, and again in their correlative aspect.

Were this Essay written immediately at the close of the Three Ages we have proposed to review instead of in the Nineteenth, we should

have little more to add. It has been shewn in the last Chapter, that the Episcopal College consisted of Bishops sharing equal functions, and possessed of authority and jurisdiction identical at least in kind. There could therefore be no reason for singling out any one Church for further inquiry.

Far otherwise is it now. The grand phenomena in the Church history of the last 1200 years, call our attention to the fortunes and the pretensions of one See. On these events it is not our purpose to dwell. They are sufficiently familiar, and entirely distinct from the matters in hand; and they are only alluded to thus cursorily in order to justify our devoting an additional Chapter, at the expense of the symmetry of our scheme and at the risk of repetition, to the contemplation of the particular relations of the Roman Church to the whole Catholic body in primitive ages.

Already has enough been adduced to refute, on general grounds, the later claims of Rome. It is with feelings of amazement that one is arrested by these claims after a study of really primitive Antiquity, such as has led to the conclusions already enunciated.

Is it *possible*, one asks oneself, after having been immersed in the history of the early Church, is it really *possible* that any See can have advanced pretensions to a worldwide supremacy, that any Bishop can ever have arrogated to himself to be the fountain of all Episcopal control, the single depositary of all the power that Christ delegated to His Church, to be in himself the sufficient and necessary arbiter in all controversies of faith? Above all, is it possible that an immense majority of Christendom can have consented to believe this lie?

Alas, it is possible; for it is fact. And the events of very recent months have re-awakened the astonished indignation of Englishmen; for such claims have been obtruded upon ourselves. What though that indignation too often found its vent, as all strong national feelings must, in the fanatic and senseless clamor of the populace? Is that any reason why the honest indignation that found such utterance should not have been based upon solid and never to be shaken Truth? Can that mitigate the just and sorrowful surprise with which the better informed

student contemplates the pretensions and the attack of Rome ?

Let us retrace with care and with reference to this single See, some of the steps which conducted us to the conclusions of the last Chapter ; conclusions which, if we feel assured they were sound, are at once fatal to the pretensions of the Roman Pontiff. If it be true that all Bishops were coequal in order and functions, what becomes of the Roman Supremacy ? If all were independent and irresponsible, unless in cases of supposed heresy ; and if then there was no resource but in the decrees of the Synod or the Council, where is the infallible tribunal of appeal which we are told existed from the beginning in the Eternal City ? If all Bishops were alike regarded as successors to the Episcopal authority in a direct and independent line drawn from Apostolic institution, how can the Pope have been the sole depositary of Apostolic power ?

We are perfectly satisfied of the impregnable security of these positions, and consequently we are convinced of the futility of the Papal claims, so far as they are based on his-

toric precedent, which is the only light in which we are here called on to regard them. But since a pretence of historic authority is actually put forward—and, however inconsistent with the above well ascertained facts, since this pretence is not in all cases without a plausible shew of evidence, it will be well to investigate more closely the particular attitude of the Bishop of Rome in the first three centuries.

We shall be able to ascertain his position at that era by a twofold method. We may observe his relation to other Christian Bishops in cases in which he is a prominent actor. This forms the positive or direct index to his true character and position. And we shall find a far wider field of evidence in the pursuit of an indirect method. We may inquire into the actual history of circumstances in which he must have played a conspicuous part on the supposition that certain hypotheses respecting him were true. If we find that he never assumed that part—or if his assumption of it was ever treated as an anomaly and resented by all other Churches—we may be sure that those hypotheses are untenable. “If it

be objected that such discourses are negative, and therefore of small force; I answer that therefore are they most proper to assert such a negative proposition: for how can we otherwise better shew a thing not to be than by shewing it to have no footstep there where it is supposed to stand? Such arguments indeed in such cases are not merely negative, but rather privative; proving things not to be, because not affirmed there where in reason they ought to be affirmed; standing therefore upon positive suppositions, that holy Scripture, that general tradition, are not imperfect and lame toward their design; that ancient writers were competently intelligent, faithful, diligent; that all of them could not conspire in perpetual silence about things of which they had often fair occasion and great reason to speak; in fine, such arguments, however they may be eluded by sophistical wits, will yet bear great sway, and often will amount near to the force of demonstration with men of honest prudence¹."

It is much to be deplored that our records of the earlier Bishops of Rome are so scanty,

¹ Barrow, Of the Pope's Supremacy.

and so little trustworthy. With the exception of their names and dates, the history of that Church in the second and third centuries is well nigh a blank. And¹ even this bare catalogue of enumeration is not without its doubts and difficulties. As the myth filled up all the deficiencies in the story of Pagan, so the Legend came to complete the history of Christian Rome. The inventive genius of the Martyrologist supplied what was lacking to the Chronicler. We have scarcely any statements in detail respecting the early Bishops of Rome composed before the sixth century².

But whatever records of veracity we do possess are very far from conveying the impression that the Bishops of whom they tell

¹ It is strange that, in the face of the too well known uncertainties which embarrass early Roman Church history, we should meet with confident assertions such as the following: "The Romans knew better than anybody, from their first regular Bishop, Clemens, that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not S. Paul's."—Bunsen, Hippolytus and his Age, i. 25. Irenæus tells us that S. Peter and S. Paul committed that Church first to Linus, (Iren. iii. 3.)

² "Dico nullum Papam aut alium quemcunque fuisse auctorem Libri Pontificum sive gestorum Pontificalium ante sextum sæculum, imò nullum ejusmodi librum in Ecclesiæ extitisse ante annum CLX ab obitu Damasi Papæ."—Pearson, i. xii. 4.

us had acquired, justly or unjustly, any such Primacy as their successors have asserted. Indeed the Roman Church was so far from being the infallible Judge of Orthodoxy that it was even in that early age not free from the taint of heresy itself: and so far was its Bishop from concentrating in himself alone all Episcopal and Ecclesiastical power that it was more than once necessary for the Rulers of other, and even confessedly secondary Churches, to exert the authority inherent in them in order to check and rebuke his errors. It is a melancholy task to recite the faults and failings of so noble a Church as was that of primitive Rome; nor would it be willingly done save in self-defence.

We have already adverted to the Noetian heresies of Zephyrinus and Callistus. With such severity was it necessary for even a Suffragan Bishop to expose them that the language held by S. Hippolytus on the occasion has not only startled; it has actually raised doubts as to Callistus having ever attained the Episcopate at all. For in pursuance of the principles of that school of S. John the Divine to which he belonged, S. Hippolytus refused

to concede the title of Bishop to one who was entangled in so deadly an error as that of Callistus. "Zephyrinus (he says) *imagined* that he governed the Church at that time¹." "And Callistus *imagined* that he had attained the object of his wishes"—(the Episcopal chair). He refused to acknowledge them as legitimate Bishops, because they were abettors of heresy. They were in his opinion such as S. John had spoken of; "Thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." In a similar spirit had S. Irenæus² said, "We must obey those in the Church, who have the succession from the Apostles, and together with the Episcopal succession, have received the genuine charisma of *Truth*." And S. Hippolytus, the distinguished scholar of Irenæus, thus³ asserts the same principle, "A Bishop who is burdened with ignorance or malice is no longer a Bishop—but is falsely so called."

Nor were these the only instances of a departure on the part of the Chief Pastor of

¹ Philosophumena, p. 279, 30.

² S. Iren. iv. 43.

³ Hippol. i. p. 247. [Ed. Fabricii.]

the Roman See from the Truth in Christ. There was a Bishop of Rome in the second century who favored Montanism—it is not clearly ascertained what was his name, but the fact is recorded by Tertullian¹. And it is generally stated by Roman writers that Marcellinus, a Bishop of Rome at the end of the third century, fell away in time of persecution, and sacrificed to Pagan divinities.

The allowances which charity bids us make for these defections from first love are such as only strengthen us in our conviction that there was no extraordinary virtue resident in the Romish See which distinguished it from other Churches. “The Clergy² and laity of the Roman Church do not appear to have been gifted with endowments of learning. The Latin Church had few eminent teachers at that time. They were liable to be swayed by the eager partisanship of heretical teachers, resorting to Rome from Asia, and bringing with them the restless spirit and dialectic shrewdness of the East.”

In truth, the evidence which shews the

¹ Adv. Praxean. i.

² Wordsworth, S. Hippolytus, p. 207.

Church of Rome to have been in no respect (except in a certain voluntary reverence conceded to her by other communities) distinguished from the rest of Christendom is very varied. It is in this fact that we must seek the reason that the above heresies—and especially one so melancholy and important as that of Zephyrinus and Callistus, excited so little attention in the Catholic Church. Before the Council of Nicæa, Rome professed to be no more than a single independent Church—distinguished indeed among the other Churches of Christendom, but not in any wise distinguished from them. After the Christianization of the Empire she assumed, from her civil relations, a widely different aspect, and the clamor consequent on any heresy in the West resounded throughout Christendom. But in the beginning of the third century, there were not more than fifty presbyters in the Church of Rome; and we learn from the writings of Minucius Felix, an author of the same date as the compiler of the *Philosophumena*, that it was then no more than “an obscure and retiring tribe;” and of their resources he

speaks thus: "The greater and better part of you labor under penury, cold, and hunger¹."

So much may warrant us in asserting that there was not, either in the external magnificence, or in the extraordinary purity of the Roman Church, anything which marked her as possessing peculiar features of pre-eminence. We now proceed to proofs that no such distinction was accorded her by other Churches. The style of address used by primitive Bishops in their intercourse with her Prelate, indicates that they regarded him in the light of an equal rather than a Sovereign. "Brother, Colleague, Fellow Bishop," are the terms of respectful familiarity in which Fabianus, Cornelius, Lucius, and Stephen, were addressed by the Archbishop of Carthage: "Know now my brother," says Dionysius² of Alexandria, to Pope Stephen. Moreover, the titles which have in later ages been claimed exclusively by the head of the Roman were, in the first three

¹ "Latebrosa et lucifugax natio," "pars vestrum major et melior egetis, algetis, fame laboratis."—Min. Felix, p. 75 and 102. Ed. Lug. Bat. 1672.

² "Ἰσθι νῦν ἀδελφε.—Euseb. VII. 5.

centuries, common to the chief Pastors of every Church. Tertullian¹, speaking indefinitely of any Christian Bishop who absolves penitents, calls him "Benedictus Papa." At the very same time Dionysius, a presbyter of Alexandria, speaks² of his Bishop as the "blessed Pope Heraclas." And among Cyprian's Epistles, those addressed to him are usually inscribed "Cypriano Papæ." "Patres patrum," "Episcopi episcoporum," were titles³ given by courtesy to others than the Bishop of Rome. And even "Vicars of Christ" were all Bishops anciently styled, as is confessed by the eminent Romish authority, Rigaltius. With the propriety or safety of such titles, we are not here concerned. Our office is simply to observe, that they were not the peculiar prerogative of one Bishop more than of any other. "It must be confessed," says that⁴ learned Romanist, Thomassin, "that the name of Pope, of Apostle, of Apostolic Prelate, of Apostolic See, was still common to all

¹ De Pud. 13.

² Ap. Euseb. vii. 7.

³ See authorities in Bingham, ii. ii. 8.

⁴ I. i. 4.

Bishops, even during the three centuries which elapsed from the reign of Clovis to the empire of Charlemagne."

It is indeed perfectly true, as we had occasion to notice before, that Rome was distinguished among other leading Churches of Antiquity. There were marks of deference and reverence which were, in courtesy, accorded to her beyond all other Churches; but they were accompanied by the most jealous care that no authority or supremacy should be either implied in them, or conveyed by their means. Let us ascertain more clearly the form and the grounds of this distinction.

"As to the Bishop of Rome in particular," says Mosheim¹, "he was regarded by Cyprian, and doubtless by others also, as holding a certain primacy in the Church. But the fathers, who with Cyprian attributed this primacy to the Roman Bishop, strenuously contended for the equality of all Bishops in respect to dignity and authority; and disregarding the Bishop of Rome's judgment, whenever they thought it incorrect, had no hesitation in following their own." Their assertions on this head are in-

¹ Vol. I. p. 226.

deed so explicit¹ as to make it scarcely intelligible what the Roman primacy amounted to. The fact is it was entirely a matter of courtesy, conceded on many grounds, but never allowed as a right. And like most concessions of courtesy, it amounted to very little practical power, and was limited rather by a general consent and feeling of propriety than by prescribed definitions. "All the² acts of S. Cyprian's Episcopate [we have already discussed several, and more will be adduced below] are an indisputable assurance to the candid mind that he treated the Roman Pontiff simply as his brother—his elder brother indeed,—holding the first See in Christendom, but individually as liable to err as himself."

It will not, I believe, be found possible to state any one single ground on which this precedence was conceded. Nor will it be possible, consistently with historic fidelity, to exclude any of those alleged by different parties, as is not unfrequently attempted in controversial works.

¹ e. g. "Nam nec Petrus . . . vindicavit sibi aliquid insolenter, aut arroganter assumpsit se primatum tenere et obtemperari a novellis et posteris sibi debere."—Cyprian.

² Allies, p. 56.

The Romanist exaggerates its extent, giving it a preternatural and preposterous width, while he narrows its basis to the single ground of the alleged foundation of the See by S. Peter. The Ultra Protestant endeavours to represent it as the illegitimate attendant upon the opulence and civil importance of the Capital. But the faithful disciple of history will discover that neither of these causes was the sole reason of the pre-eminence and gradual growth of Roman authority. Each of these had its influence. The former, perhaps, will be found to have been the basis of the precedence conceded before the Nicene epoch to the Roman Pontiff; but it never could have furnished the grounds of Supremacy¹. The latter, more secular and changing in its nature, had more influence in the post-Nicene developement of very different pretensions. The former reason mainly, though not alone, contributed to the affectionate reverence of early ages. Civil relations and imperial analogies principally conduced, after the Christianization of the State, to the developement of Papal tyranny.

It may, without difficulty, be shewn from

¹ See the last quotation from S. Cyprian.

Tertullian's writings, that he considered all Apostolic Churches to possess independence and parity. He professes, indeed, a peculiar reverence for the Church of Rome; but with him it would appear, that this deference was due not so much to the tradition of S. Peter's being the first occupant of that See, as to the fact that three Apostles had been Confessors or Martyrs there. It is quite clear, from a passage in his treatise de Pudicitia¹, that the grant of the Keys, and the declaration that "upon this Rock the Church should be built," were not *at that time* considered to have any exclusive reference to the Church of Rome.

Nor indeed was the degree of Primacy which, in the Cyprian age, was conceded to Rome as "the See of Peter and the principal city²," built entirely on the Apostolic origin of that Church. This is evident from the words of S. Cyprian himself: "Since Rome ought, in consideration of her magnitude, to take precedence of Carthage³." And the

¹ c. 21.

² Cypr. Ep. LIX.

³ "Quoniam *pro magnitudine sua* debeat Carthaginem Roma præcedere."—Cypr. Ep. LII. p. 97.

like reason induced a Pagan¹ historian to observe, "the Roman Bishop had a greater authority than other Bishops."

It may suffice to have thus far indicated the general grounds of the very ancient respect which the Roman Bishop enjoyed, and to have noticed how the proportionate weight of the general reasons thereof varied with the varying relations of the Church and the State. It is not my purpose to trace the unhappy effects of this primitive reverence for the first See, as they were exhibited when that reverence was developed into servile submission in ages subsequent to those under consideration. I have already indicated how natural to human views and how analogous to the progress of human institutions was the gradual transition from the Metropolitan to the Patriarchal system; and from the Patriarchal to the Monarchic; terminating in the establishment of one Prince of Patriarchs, the Pope of Rome; when, at least, human views and the analogies of human institutions were brought into the Church by her closer contact

¹ "Auctoritate quâ potiores æternæ urbis Episcopi."
—Amm. Marcell. xv. (p. 47.)

with the Empire. I proceed to conclude our investigation by adducing some negative evidence, and some historic incidents of great significance.

Were it not strange indeed, if the occupancy of the Episcopal Chair at Rome by S. Peter were intended to convey the title and prerogatives of Supremacy to that See, that the inspired Apostle should himself have taken no occasion to assert the rights of his successors? Was any opportunity more fitting than that afforded by the publication of Catholic Epistles? Injunctions to reverence towards supreme authorities were not indeed forgotten by S. Peter¹; but we hear nothing from him of a Primacy to be lodged in his successors.

Nor yet does S. Paul, the fellow-worker with S. Peter in the establishment of the Roman Church, though his relations with Rome were so intimate, and though his Epistles were so frequently written either to that city or from it, give the slightest intimation of the extraordinary regard subsequently claimed by her spiritual Rulers.

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 13—17.

So much for the Apostolic Age. We have a remarkable indication of the feelings of the primitive Church in sub-Apostolic times. A large portion of the valuable writings known as the remains of the Apostolic Fathers consists of an Epistle written by S. Clemens, himself mentioned by S. Paul, and one of the earliest successors of S. Peter. This noble monument of Christian antiquity is a letter written to the Church of Corinth, which was rent by faction. He uses every argument to persuade them to charity and to peace, except that of authoritative command. He claims no sway over them of any kind. The tone and temper of his Epistle is entirely that of paternal exhortation. He "intreats as a brother," he nowhere "rebukes with all authority." And so far is he from making any allusion to his pretended inheritance to the Vicarship of Christ, that he speaks far more of S. Paul than of his brother founder.

Indeed, any pretensions to supremacy founded on a successorship to S. Peter, would have been preposterous in an age when other Churches of first rank could claim the same

Apostle for their founder. Antioch in particular¹ asserted its title to that honour, but never claimed any primacy on that plea. And at that period it can hardly be questioned, that there would have been a greater disposition to regard Jerusalem as the Mother and Queen of all Churches than any other See.

One of the most ancient controversies which divided the Church was that concerning the Easter Festival. S. Polycarp came to Rome on purpose to confer with Anicetus on the question. But they were unable to agree. And so far was either from considering any final or superior authority to exist in the Roman See, that they parted on the friendly understanding that each should maintain their several customs. Was the Bishop of Rome regarded as the infallible arbiter of controversy in the time of Polycarp?

The testimony of Tertullian is explicit on the subject of the deference to be conceded to the greater Churches. I have already referred to him as grounding this deference in

¹ Θρόνον τῆς Ἀντιοχείων μεγαλοπόλεως, τὸν τοῦ ἁγίου Πέτρου.—Syn. Chalced. vii.

the case of Rome, rather on the fact of Apostles having witnessed there for the Truth, than because it owed its foundation to S. Peter. The whole passage¹ however is well worth study, as it sets in a very clear light the opinions of the Fathers with whom he was contemporary, and completely precludes us from imagining that it was only to Rome that such reverence was paid. "Go," says he, "through the Apostolic Churches, in which the very Sees of the Apostles, at this very day, preside over their own places...Is Achaia near to thee? Thou hast Corinth. If thou art not far from Macedonia, thou hast Philippi, thou hast the Thessalonians. If thou canst travel into Asia, thou hast Ephesus. But, if thou art near to Italy, thou hast Rome, where we also have an authority close at hand. What a happy Church is that in which the Apostles poured out all their doctrine with their blood, &c."

We have already had frequent occasion to notice the sentiments of S. Cyprian and his contemporaries on the subject before us. The eventful circumstances of his time are so

¹ De Præscr. Hæret. 36.

much the most fully recorded and the most significant in their bearings upon it, that we will review a few of them.

Marcian was Bishop of the Christian people at Arles. He joined himself to the schismatic Novatian, and by such a proceeding became, as we have seen, amenable to the judgment and animadversions of his Episcopal Colleagues. S. Cyprian takes the matter in hand. He writes a letter to Pope Stephen, "which sets forth at once his view of the Primacy of that Pontiff and of the Episcopal relation to it. He wishes Stephen to write a letter to the people of Arles by which Marcian might be excommunicated, and another Bishop substituted for him. This alone shews how great the authority of the Bishop of Rome in such an emergency was. But the tone of his language is worth considering¹." He addresses him as "most dear brother," and reminds him that "therefore is the numerous body of Priests joined together in mutual concord and the bond of unity, that if any one of our order attempt to make a heresy, and to sever and lay waste the flock of Christ, the rest may fly

¹ Allies, p. 39.

to the rescue, and like useful and merciful shepherds, collect the Lord's sheep into a flock."

A more celebrated controversy brought out yet more fully the view of the Cyprianic Age as to the relations of the Bishop of Rome to the rest of the Episcopal body. S. Cyprian took a very strong view of one side of the question, whether heretics should be admitted into the Church by re-baptization, or by the imposition of hands. Stephen of Rome took the opposite view with no less decision. "S. Stephen¹, we all know, turned out to be right. That fervent Pontiff, it may be remarked, when S. Cyprian would not give up his view, seemed inclined to treat him much as Gregory the Seventh did a refractory Emperor, or Innocent the Third the dastard John. This may be very satisfactory to the modern defenders of Papal omnipotence, but not so S. Cyprian's conduct. He called a Council of Bishops of the provinces of Carthage and Numidia. They attended to the number of seventy-one, and decided that heretics should be re-baptized. S. Cyprian informs the Pope

¹ Allies, p. 41.

of the decision of himself and his Colleagues." On this occasion it was that he expressed the celebrated sentiment, "Herein we too do violence and give the law to no one, inasmuch as every Bishop has the free choice of his own will in the administration of the Church, as he will give an account of his acts to the Lord." The controversy now became critical. Stephen received this decision of the African Council so ill, that he would not even see the Bishops who brought it, nor allow the faithful to offer them common hospitality. S. Cyprian comments on his reply in a letter to his brother Bishop Pompeius, "Since you desired to be informed what answer our brother Stephen sent me to our letters, I send you a copy of his rescript, after reading which you will more and more mark his error, &c. For amongst other, either proud, or impertinent, or inconsistent remarks, &c..." And at the conclusion of his letter, instead of deferring to the Papal decision, he says, "This now the Priests of God ought to do, preserving the Divine precepts, so that if in anything truth has been shaken and tottered, we may return to the fountain-head of the Lord, and

to the Evangelical and Apostolical Tradition, &c.”

It only remains to add to this instructive narrative, that a fresh African Council confirmed S. Cyprian's view, and set at nought the irate threats of Stephen. And that S. Augustine, writing 140 years later, and fully agreeing with the judgment of Pope Stephen, as had the whole Church finally, quotes the entire passage; and expressly approves the independence of S. Cyprian's sentiments and acts. We must not however omit to notice the concurrence of the voice of the Eastern Church. Dionysius of Alexandria, and many other prelates, among the rest Firmilian, Metropolitan of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, supported S. Cyprian. In a long letter¹ to the Archbishop of Carthage he says, “And here I am justly indignant at this so open and manifest folly of Stephen, because, glorying as he does in the rank of his Episcopate, and maintaining that he holds the succession of Peter, upon whom the foundations of the Church were laid, he introduces many other rocks, while he affirms on his own authority, &c.”

¹ Cyp. Ep. LXXV.

The letter concludes with an apostrophe to Stephen, "Do not be deceived. Since he is the true schismatic who has made himself an apostate from the Communion of the Church's oneness; for whilst thou dost fancy that all can be excommunicated by thee, thou hast excommunicated thyself alone from all."

We will not linger on the story of Basilides. He was a Spanish Bishop who, having been deposed in his own country, betook himself to Rome, and gained the ear of Stephen, who attempted to restore him. Such an anomalous procedure was at once resented by S. Cyprian, whose expressions, while they shew a spirit of charity towards his Roman brother, entirely deny him either Supremacy or Infallibility. "Nor so much," says he, "should Stephen be blamed, who through negligence was overreached, as the other execrated, who fraudulently deceived. But if Basilides could overreach men, God he cannot¹." "If² the appeal of Basilides to Stephen proves the Roman Primacy, what does the subsequent ap-

¹ See an account of this matter in Fleury, vii. 23; S. Cypr. Ep. LXVII.

² Allies, p. 56.

peal of the people of Leon, Asturia and Merida to Carthage prove? And if the restoration of Basilides by Stephen proves that he possessed that power, what does the subsequent pronouncing of that restoration void, by Cyprian and his brother Bishops, without even first acquainting Stephen, prove?

What we have seen is this. In the matter of Fortunatus and Felicissimus, Cyprian rejects with vehement indignation their appeal to Rome. In the case of Marcian of Arles, having as well as Pope Stephen, been appealed to by Faustinus, Bishop of Lyons, and his colleagues, he writes as an equal to Stephen, almost enjoining him what to do: in the question of re-baptizing heretics he disregards Stephen's judgment, and the anathema which accompanies it; and how strong Firmilian's language is, we need not repeat, who declares that Stephen's excommunication only cut off himself: in the case of Basilides, he deposes afresh one whom Stephen had restored."

We learn from Eusebius¹ that an attempt at encroachment on the part of the Roman Bishop Victor in the second century had

¹ Euseb. v. 23—5.

proved equally abortive. The matter at issue was the Paschal controversy, which had already afforded us an instance in the case of Polycarp, that the Eastern Churches of the first century owed no submission to Rome. The contending parties were Victor of Rome and the Asian Churches headed by Polycrates Archbishop of Ephesus. The contention was so sharp between them that Victor threatened and endeavoured to cut them off from the Unity of the Church. But he was met with the uncompromising reply of Polycrates, "having conferred with my brethren throughout the world, *and having studied Holy Scripture*, I am not alarmed at what I am threatened with." Thus in each of the first three ages we find that an emphatic negative was given to any interference on the part of the Bishop of Rome in the discipline of other Churches.

And we have instances of their free and independent action without any reference to the Roman See. Paul of Samosata, Bishop of the Third See in Christendom was deposed by a Council of his own and the neighbouring Provinces, and though the Bishop of the Second See was invited to attend, the Bishop of

the First was not applied to. In the year of Christ 142, Marcion, a profligate excommunicated by his own father the Bishop of Pontus, came to Rome, and "besought¹ the Elders who had been taught by disciples of the Apostles, without effect that he might be received into communion. Addressing them openly, he said, Why have you refused to receive me? They replied, We cannot do this without the permission of your excellent Father; since one is our faith and one the agreement of our minds."

Thus we find historic evidence at every epoch within the period we are to consider, and with every variety of circumstance and detail, establishing the entire independence of Rome which every Christian Church enjoyed; not in any degree inconsistent with the great reverence usually and voluntarily conceded to so venerable and important a Church. On the other hand we entirely fail to discover evidence of the Supremacy where we should most naturally expect it. It is a theory evidently unknown to Eusebius, the diligent compiler of all facts relating to the Roman

¹ Epiphanius, Hæres. 42.

Bishops. It is to be found in no ancient summary of Faith or discipline. In all the treatises the Fathers have given us on the method of confuting heretics we never meet the obvious way prescribed, of reference to the Universal Pastor and Vicar-general of Christ. The opinion of the Roman Church, and the deposit of Truth in her custody, is spoken of as entitled to reverence only co-ordinate with that due to other Churches. "That (says Tertullian¹) will appear to have been delivered by the Apostles, which has been treasured as sacred in the Apostolic Churches. Let us see what milk the Corinthians have drawn from S. Paul; what the Philippians, the Thessalonians, the Ephesians, read; what also the Romans, our nearer neighbours do say, to whom both Peter and Paul did leave the Gospel sealed with their blood."

"Is it not marvellous that Origen², S. Hilary, S. Cyril, S. Chrysostome, S. Jerome, S. Austin, in their commentaries and tractates upon those places of Scripture [*Tu es Petrus* :

¹ Adv. Marcion. iv. 5.

² Barrow, Of the Pope's Supremacy, p. 193.

pasce oves] whereon they now build the Papal authority, should be so dull and drowsy, as not to say a word concerning the Pope?"

Here we will close our inquiry. It has already extended to a length which, were it not for the deep interest and importance of our subject, would be tedious. The latter part of our investigation has been a task less delightful than what went before. To go round our Christian Zion and to mark well her bulwarks—this was a pleasant toil. But to undertake the revision and enumeration of narratives of early controversy; to sketch, however lightly, early phases of heresy; to have to allude to contests in which undue prerogatives were asserted in one portion of the Christian Army and denied by the consentient voice of the remainder; are not grateful offices. And to feel that it is needful to do this in self-vindication, and in antagonism to the largest Church in Christendom, is a consideration which adds nothing to the pleasure of the task.

However we must strenuously deny that such efforts in the cause of Protestant liberties, say rather of Catholic independence, are

useless. There is in Protestantism much, that from the unhappy circumstances of its history, is purely and essentially negative. But this is a characteristic which has been forced upon it, and it does not constitute the distinctive feature of orthodox Protestant Churches. The Anglican Church need not shun the title of a Protestant Church; for she can indignantly deny that she is but a bare concatenation of negations. To protest against error or against tyranny may under one aspect be simply destructive—it may indeed terminate in a barren and jejune negation—but it may also be the healthy and positive assertion of Truth. Let it then never be said that the assertion of our Christian liberties and the investigation of their solid basis—whether Scriptural or historical—is at best the demonstration of a negative proposition. What vindicates our own Spiritual Mother from the charge of Schism—what entitles her to do the part of a true Church in bringing many souls to Christ—can never be barren labor. Let us remember the spirited reply with which the Ancient British Church¹ met S. Augustine

¹ Henry Spelman, *Concil. Britann.* i. p. 108.

the first Emissary of the Romish See, "Be it known and without doubt unto you that we all are, and every one of us, obedient and subjects unto the Church of God, and to the Pope of Rome, and to every godly Christian, to love every one in his degree, in perfect charity, and to help every one of them by word and deed to be the children of God: and other obedience than this we do not know to be due to him whom you name to be Pope, nor that he is father of fathers." We have seen that this spirit of independence is warranted by every relation and by all the story of the Ancient Church—let us then cherish it in our hearts, and shew our title to it by the Christian love and holy energies of our exertions in the cause of Christ's Gospel. So may our dear Church be preserved, at least in one particular, uncorrupt; essentially Anglican, yet not the less Catholic—without fear and without reproach.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

THE origin and growth of Metropolitan Authority is involved in much obscurity. It seems, however quite certain that it took its rise as early as the second century, but as its growth was entirely spontaneous and shaped in a great degree by reference to external circumstances of Civil government, it does not appear as a universal, much less as a necessary feature of Ecclesiastical System till a period later than that under discussion.

There has been considerable difference of opinion as to the period when Metropolitan Bishops were first recognised. Usher, Beveridge, Hammond, De Marca, trace it to the Apostolic Age. And the Churches in Cyprus laid claim to a Metropolitan constitution of that antiquity¹. Bingham thinks it took rise from that common deference and respect which

¹ Concil. Ephes. Act. 7. (Labbe, III. Conc. p. 800 E.)

was usually paid to the Bishop of the civil Metropolis in every province. This custom was made into a Canon at Nicæa. The words of the Canon itself beginning τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθη κρατεῖτω leave no room for doubt that the Metropolitan Bishop was of much older date than the Council. The Council of Eliberis speaks of Primæ Cathedræ Episcopus, and the Apostolic Canons of a πρῶτος or chief Bishop in every province. Lyons, in France, was a (civil) Metropolis, and Irenæus, its Bishop, was superintendent of the Gallican Parœciæ in the second century. The name Metropolitan, however, seems to have been unknown, the Bishops who enjoyed such precedence being called πρῶτοι, κεφαλαί, and in Africa, Senes, the primacy being there conferred on the senior, and being nowhere confined to the Bishop of the civil Metropolis. In Palestine it was attached not only to the Bishop of Cæsarea, the metropolis, but in a lower degree, to the Bishop of Jerusalem likewise.

The chief functions of the Metropolitan were, to ratify and regulate the ordaining of Suffragan Prelates, to decide controversies arising among them (which he did usually by

appointing a committee of Bishops to consider the question at issue), and to call Provincial Synods, to which there lay in all cases an appeal from the decision of the Metropolitan himself.

It is worthy of remark, that the Primate of Alexandria had in number of suffragan provinces, and also in extent of jurisdiction, an authority greater than any other Metropolitan. He had liberty to ordain presbyters and deacons in all Churches in Christendom. This was, as we have seen, foreign to the spirit of primitive Church principles: but it is significant enough as disproving any early Supremacy of Rome.

As the influence and position of the Metropolitan was, in a great degree, defined by civil rather than ecclesiastical arrangements, the authority of the Patriarch and the Exarch would appear to have been entirely the result of an adaptation of the Church system to the territorial disposition of the empire. The date of the origin of these superior Prelates is disputed, but at all events, their rights and the limits of their jurisdiction were determined only on the introduction of a new and mighty

element into Church affairs by her connexion with the State. Their influence on the ante-Nicene period of Church history, may, therefore, be entirely disregarded.

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